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[THE MERCHANT AND HIS NEPHEW.]

REGINALD'S FORTUNE.

CHAPTER I.

Oh, with what authority and show of truth
Can cunning sin cover itself withal! *Shakespeare.*

It was a clear cold morning. In the busy London streets people shivered in great-coats and furs, and hastened about their affairs with brisk movements. The only persons who loitered were the homeless, homeless poor.

In a comfortable-looking dwelling at the West-end was presented a scene strongly in contrast to the chilling outer world. The handsomely furnished breakfast-room was brightened by a large sea-coal fire, which glowed and flamed behind its bars of polished steel, giving a home look to the elegant apartment. In the centre of the room was an oval breakfast-table, laid with a luxurious repast. The fragrant coffee steamed in its massive silver urn, the mutton-chops reposed upon a chafin-dish, and the various *écarteras* were in their respective places.

The room was occupied solely by the owner of the dwelling, Mr. Reid Westcourt, who was pacing back and forth, a frown upon his brow, and impatience in his movements. Occasionally he paused to look at his watch and compare the time it indicated with that of the ornate clock on the marble mantle-piece, and each time he did so his discontented expression deepened.

At length he deviated from his direct course across the apartment in order to touch a bell-pull. The tinkle it caused could be distinctly heard in the breakfast-room, and it had hardly died away ere a servant answered the summons.

"Say to your mistress that breakfast waits," said Mr. Westcourt, in a tone of ill-concealed annoyance.

The servant bowed, and withdrew.

He had hardly vanished when the door again opened, and the mistress of the dwelling made her appearance.

"Here, I've been waiting this half-hour, Isabella," exclaimed Mr. Westcourt, fretfully. "It's ten o'clock, and I've had no breakfast yet! You know that I never eat alone, and I should have been at the office by this time—"

"It's always the office," returned the lady, with an impatience answering to his own. "I am sick and tired of trade. You told me, Reid, when we were married that you would soon give up this horrid business. I am sure I would never have married a tradesman if I had supposed he would never get beyond it!"

Mr. Westcourt made no reply, but took his seat at the breakfast-table, and his wife followed his example.

Neither rang for attendance, and for some time the meal progressed in silence.

Mr. Westcourt was a tall, thin individual, with a high, retreating forehead which terminated in a large bald spot on his head, thus giving his forehead the effect of massiveness and grandeur. His small gray eyes had a shrewd, yet furtive look, and a skilled physiognomist would have noticed certain lines about his mouth that betokened a treacherous and cruel disposition. His dress was scrupulously neat, and, to an ordinary observer, his entire appearance was that of a thorough gentleman.

Mrs. Westcourt was some years younger than her husband, and remarkably good-looking. Her face was fresh in colour, plump in outline, and good in its features. Her hair was dark, her eyes of a hazel hue, and her mouth was well shaped. She was tall, and her movements were not without dignity, despite the fact that she was decidedly inclined to *embonpoint*.

As has been gathered from the complaints of his wife, Mr. Westcourt was a tradesman, the sole proprietor of the great silk-house of Westcourt in the City.

The father of Mr. Reid Westcourt had been the younger son of a gentleman. He had greatly exasperated his relatives upon whom he had been dependent by marrying for love the daughter and only child of a rich silk-merchant in the City, but the birth of a

son had finally restored to him their favour. This son was named Reginald and was early provided for by handsome bequests of freehold estates and bank-accounts from several bachelor and widowed relatives. Two years after the birth of the more fortunate Reginald, Reid Westcourt, the reader's present acquaintance, was ushered into the world. The name of his grandfather was bestowed upon him, in the hope of attracting with it the old silk-merchant's fortune, but the tradesman declared that that should only go to his successor in business, and Reid must enter his employ, work his way upwards, and finally enter into partnership with him.

This arrangement was revolting to the pride of the Westcourts, but was finally entered upon, and a few years after the formation of the partnership the grandfather died, and the name of Westcourt stood alone over the door.

The two scions of the house of Westcourt, therefore, had moved in totally different spheres. The elder, Reginald, being a gentleman of fortune, with a refined taste and a highly cultivated intellect, married a lady of considerable wealth, and moved in the society to which his birth and connections entitled him. The younger, Reid, with few ideas beyond business and pecuniary gains, married the daughter of a military officer, who brought him a moderate dowry, and he clung to his mercantile pursuits.

In consequence of their different modes of life, few people suspected the relationship between the aristocratic Reginald Westcourt and the busy City merchant.

The married life of Reginald had been supremely happy, unmarred by a single shadow, until the death of his wife a few years before the opening date of our story. He had soon after departed for the Continent, hoping to forget his grief in the excitement of travel, and had placed his only child, a son, in the care of his brother until his return. A year previous to the events now to be chronicled, Reid Westcourt had received intelligence of the death of his brother in the East, and his brother's fortune had therefore devolved upon his son Reginald.

Mr. Reid Westcourt ate his breakfast very leisurely considering the haste he had so lately evinced to depart to his place of business; and his impatient look gradually gave way to one of thoughtfulness. Noticing this change of expression, his wife soon remarked:

"You know, Reid, that I should never have married you had it not been for your aristocratic connections. I never desired to become a tradesman's wife, and you always led me to think you would give up business at an early day. Why not give it up now? Why not buy a house in Belgravia, and move in the society to which your family were accustomed? You must be very rich—richer even than your brother was."

Mr. Westcourt moved uneasily, and answered: "You don't understand business, Isabella. I am not rich—"

"Not rich! when your grandfather made a fortune in trade, and left every penny to you? Not rich—what do you mean?"

"I mean," replied the merchant, "that I have speculated largely, plunged myself into difficulties, lost large sums by the failures of debtors, and while the world esteems me so prosperous, I am on the brink of ruin."

He spoke with a sort of desperation, and as though he experienced relief in being able to speak to someone about his financial embarrassments, and not with an expectation of receiving comfort and counsel.

If he had expected them, he would have been doomed to disappointment, for Mrs. Westcourt gazed at him a moment as if incredulous, and then said, sharply:

"How can you utter such a stupid jest, Reid?"

"Jest! Would to heaven it were a jest!" exclaimed her husband. "It is only too true. I am near bankruptcy."

"But you have not seemed anxious or troubled—you have eaten as much as usual, and slept—"

"Would you have had me starve myself?" interrupted Mr. Westcourt.

The question proved puzzling to the lady, who began to believe her husband's assertions, and she exclaimed, with a burst of tears:

"Then we are actually poor! You'll be put in the Gazette. Oh, why did I marry a tradesman? A bankrupt's wife! What will people say? What will become of poor little Oriana?"

"Hush, Isabella!" said the merchant, in a low tone. "You don't want the servants to hear you."

"It makes no difference," responded Mrs. Westcourt, lowering her voice. "Everybody knows it, I suppose?"

"No one knows it but you," was the reply. "Even my clerks and manager suspect nothing. So much for being the head of my own establishment. I have told you of my difficulties, Isabella, not because I intend to fail, but to show you that I cannot retire from trade just yet."

"But how can you go on? How can you pay your debts, or meet your bills? Will my little fortune save you?"

"Your little fortune was long ago swallowed up," answered Mr. Westcourt. "If you remember, Isabella, I bought this house with it."

"Ah, yes. At least this house will remain to us!" said the wife, with a sigh of relief that a roof would remain to shelter her. "At the worst, we can sell it, and go upon the Continent to live! But, oh, poor Oriana! Can't you borrow something somewhere, Reid? Can't you get some money of my father?"

"How can I? He is simply a captain on half-pay, with barely enough money for his own support. You have no rich relatives, my dear."

"But you, Reid. Couldn't you apply to some of your own connections?"

"I have none to apply to. If Reginald were alive he would willingly assist me, but my father and mother are dead, and the few relatives who remain to me turn the cold shoulder upon me because I am a tradesman. No, Isabella, in regard to relatives, I am as poor as yourself."

"But, Reid," persisted Mrs. Westcourt; "I have heard of money-lenders and such people who might help you. If not, why not borrow of some of your business friends?"

"In the first place, I have patronized 'money-lenders' as much as I can without plunging myself into immediate ruin. In the second place, to endeavour to borrow money of my 'business friends' would be to simply advertise the fact of my pecuniary embarrassments, and pull my house down over my head with my own hands. My 'business friends' would instantly take the alarm and send in their bills for payment."

"I don't understand why you should fail," said his wife, with renewed tears. "Why should you speculate in such a way as to threaten us with poverty? Oh, I wish I'd never married. I can never endure the disgrace that will come. And to have our furniture and

things sold for a bare pittance to live on! I shall die—I know I shall."

Mr. Westcourt listened to his wife's complaints in silence, and finally said:

"I don't intend to fail, Isabella!"

"But how can you go on?"

The merchant arose from his seat, approached his wife, and said, in a confidential tone:

"My nephew, Reginald, will have, on coming of age, seventy thousand pounds in available funds and freehold estates."

The lady assented.

"My brother left that sum of seventy thousand pounds to his son, counting the settlements of the lad's mother. In his will he declared that if the boy died before attaining his majority, I should inherit the whole. In fact, I am to be the boy's heir."

"But, Reid—surely, you do not contemplate—"

"I contemplate nothing. I wish merely to discuss with you the situation of affairs. You know that I am his guardian, and hold all his property in trust for him. Now, I can use enough of his fortune to disembarass myself, and can repay it at my leisure. That will be but borrowing, you know."

"True, and of your own nephew, too. Shall you speak to the boy about it?"

"Certainly not. By the way, Isabella, he looks sickly, I think. What did the doctor say about him lately?"

"He said he must have great care or he might die—he is so frail. He says his tutor must be dismissed, that his books must be laid aside, and that he must have a little gentle exercise every day. He wants him to have a pony, and says we mustn't think of sending him to school. It's a disappointment to me that he is so delicate. The doctor says that he has grown too fast and studied too hard. I had hoped he would have grown up to be as handsome as his father was, and then marry our Oriana. It would keep his fortune in the family!"

"I have had such plans myself!" responded the merchant. "But it's by no means certain that he would choose to marry Oriana. At present, he seems to dislike her. If Reginald's fortune were mine, I would soon give up trade, and with half his fortune as a dowry our daughter might make a brilliant marriage!"

"True," remarked Mrs. Westcourt, her maternal vanity flattered. "But these sickly people, you know, Reid, often outlive healthy ones, and very likely, as the boy grows older, he may have as strong a constitution as his father's."

"But he doesn't look to me as if he would ever grow up," said the husband, in a peculiarly significant tone. "As the doctor says, he studies too much and doesn't take enough exercise. Have you ever told anyone of the amount of his fortune?"

"No. You know you told me not to mention it!"

"Very good. Now, in order to give the lad exercise, I am going to put him into my house of business. He'll have enough exercise there!"

"But, Reid, you know the doctor says the boy must have the tenderest care. It will kill the child."

"A fig for the doctor's opinion!"

"But—but what will people say?"

"What can they say of his own uncle? No one knows the extent of his fortune, or if he has anything, thanks to his father's carelessness about mentioning such things, as well as to our own reticence. The boy's mother was an orphan, so there are no relatives to interfere. Should anyone speak to either of us upon the subject, it will be easy for us to say that a part of his fortune was invested in foreign stocks, which were worth nothing, and that the rest was invested in Howell's Bank, which failed a few months ago. Howell absconded, you know, so no one can contradict us. And who would venture to doubt the word of the rich silk-merchant?"

"No one—no one!"

"Very good. The lad shall go into the counting-house to-day. He shall sleep there at night as a sort of guard or watchman, and can get his meals at an eating-house near. In fact, Isabella, he leaves our house to-day for ever. You will not see him again!"

Mrs. Westcourt ventured to make a few feeble remonstrances to her husband's plan, but her objections were soon over-ruled. Her husband pictured to her the advantages to be derived from it in such a way as to show that his own mind was quite made up on the subject.

"He will soon die, then?" the lady whispered, after a brief silence.

"Very likely," was the reply. "If he does die before coming of age, I shall be able to gratify your desires for a fine house and grand society."

"And shall we tell people that he has gone into your business house?"

"Certainly. They would applaud my conduct in taking a supposed penniless boy into my establishment and giving him a chance to rise. They would

say that I was doing by him what my grandfather Reid did by me. Yes, we will state frankly, Isabella, that I have taken the boy into my business. Let people think that I am doing a father's part by the lad!"

He stroked his chin complacently.

"After all, such a course would only accelerate his death," said Mrs. Westcourt, musingly. "I am sure people do much worse things every day. If we could only look behind the scenes, I daresay our friends are not half so good as we are. Yes, Reid, we will carry out your plan. It is impossible for us to become poor, and, as you suggested, the boy does not like Oriana, and might never want to marry her if he grew up. These childish likes and dislikes are sure to grow stronger in manhood and womanhood. For our own sakes, for Oriana's sake, we will do this thing. But, Reid, I apprehend that you will experience great trouble in forcing Reginald into the business. He has uncommon strength of will and character, although he is as innocent of the world as a baby, and he may object to your plans!"

"Let him object, then!"

"You know, Reid," resumed Mrs. Westcourt, "that although we have been careful to keep Reginald in ignorance of the fact of his wealth, we have petted and indulged him even more than our own child. Oriana has always been taught to give way to him, and to endeavour to win his love. I was always planning their eventual marriage, you know. Our treatment never spoiled the lad, but I fear he will not do as you wish now."

"He will not dare dispute my will," declared the merchant. "I will send for him."

He arose, touched the bell, and ordered "Master Reginald" to be sent to the breakfast-room. He then replenished the fire and resumed his seat.

A few minutes passed, and a boy entered the room.

He was Reginald Westcourt, the nephew of the silk-merchant.

He was about fourteen years of age, slight in frame, yet tall for his years, and a very noble-looking fellow. His forehead was broad and high, and shaded by wavy hair flung carelessly back; his eyes were large and fearless, and his countenance was at once bold and winning.

"You sent for me, uncle," he said, respectfully, after greeting his relatives with a bow.

"I did. What is that you have in your hand?"

"A book, sir," was the reply. "I was reading when I received your message."

"A book, eh? What book?"

"The Arabian Nights, sir."

"Lay it down. Reading isn't good for you, my lad. You need exercise, and plenty of it. Your mode of life must be changed."

"Oh, uncle, are you going to get me a pony?" cried the boy. "The doctor said I should have one."

"I am to be your doctor now," replied Mr. Westcourt, grimly. "You have no need of a pony. Why, at your age I could keep my grandfather's books. It's quite time you were doing something for yourself, Reginald. You know, of course, that you are poor?"

"Oh, no, I am not," responded the boy, fearlessly. "My father had a fortune, and left it to me—his only son."

"Who's been telling you such stuff as this?"

"Why, I know it!" was the reply. "My father told me once, when I was a very little fellow, that I would inherit all he owned!"

"But he lost all his fortune, my lad," said the merchant, in affected pity. "You have not a penny of your own."

The boy turned pale, looked from one to the other of his relatives, and then said:

"Are you sure?"

"Of course. You are a dependant upon my bounty, Reginald!"

The boy drew himself up proudly, and said, with a quiver of his lips:

"Then I will be so no longer!"

The merchant smiled, and he asked:

"What can you do by yourself? Nothing. But I do not forget, my lad, that I am your uncle, and I shall do by you as my grandfather did by me—take you into my business house! You will have to work there, very hard, it is true, but you will receive good pay considering your years and services!"

"I don't like trade," said Reginald, a shadow resting on his face. "My father wanted me to study and read, and learn how to use his wealth to the best advantage for myself and others."

"But you have no fortune!" declared the merchant.

"I hope, Reginald, you don't affect to despise your uncle's business," remarked Mrs. Westcourt. "You ought to be thankful for his generosity to you!"

The lad was thoughtful a moment, and it was

evident that the idea of entering his uncle's business house was painfully repugnant to him. He made a vigorous effort to conquer the feeling, however, and said, quietly:

"If I am poor, uncle, I will accept your offer. I shall at least be independent!"

The merchant thought it best not to notice his nephew's doubts in regard to his statements about his penniless condition, and replied:

"I am glad to see that you desire to be independent, my lad. You will sleep over the counting-house, and live in the City entirely. You will get your meals at a restaurant, and will lead, altogether, a thorough business life!"

"And the pay?" asked the boy, whose keen gaze had been attentively fixed upon his uncle's countenance.

"Oh, the pay? Well, Reginald, according to ordinary usages, you would have to pay me a handsome premium, but, being my nephew, I waive that and shall pay you a salary. You will receive half-a-crown a day, and, out of that you must purchase your own food. I will continue to supply you with clothing suitable for my nephew!"

"Will half-a-crown a day buy the port wine and nourishing meats the doctor ordered me to have?" asked Reginald.

"It will buy you all you need," was the sharp reply. "Half-a-crown a day is handsome pay for a boy of your age and inexperience. Your dinner will be eighteen-pence, and then you have a shilling to divide between breakfast and supper. Perhaps you can lay up something out of it, and so learn business habits."

The boy's proud lips curled, but he made no response.

"You must begin your new career to-day," continued Mr. Westcourt. "You will not have time to visit hereafter, and must bid your aunt and cousin adieu for good. It may be years before you see them again. Now, go up and pack your box, so that it can be sent to the office this evening. Then bid the family good-bye, wrap up well, and take the omnibus for the City. You will find me there when you arrive. You may go!"

Reginald bowed and turned and left the room.

"The boy has too much spirit, Isabella," observed the merchant, when they found themselves alone. "It must be broken! Did you notice with what a haughty air he departed? I fancy he does not half believe what I said about his poverty. Well, his doubts will soon be set at rest, as well as his spirit, in a quietness that cannot be broken. See that he comes to the City within an hour, Isabella, and take hope for the future."

The merchant arose, and, after a few additional remarks, left the dwelling, proceeding to his place of business.

CHAPTER II.

Oh, be of comfort!
Make patience a noble fortitude,
And think not how unkindly we are used!

Webster.

On leaving the breakfast-room, Reginald hastened upstairs to a pretty room on the second floor and flung himself upon a couch, giving way to a wild burst of weeping. He had been tanned with his dependence upon his uncle's bounty, and his proud boyish heart was wounded to the core. The sudden change, too, in the manner of his relatives cut him deeply. Ever since he had been placed in their charge by his father he had been treated by them with the utmost consideration and kindness.

Nothing had, been deemed good enough for him, and his every desire had been gratified, almost before expression.

This course had been adopted by his uncle and aunt in order to strengthen their influence over him, and with a view to his ultimate marriage with their daughter.

Of course, the cause of their kindness had never been made known to the boy, but he keenly felt its withdrawal.

The room he had entered was evidently his own, and it showed plainly the position he had occupied in the family. It was a large square chamber, with an alcove for a bed, and was furnished with a velvet carpet, rosewood and damask furniture, a couch or two, and a book-case, filled with books of adventure, boy's stories, fairy tales, with volumes of history, biography, and poetry. The books all showed service. The walls were hung with pictures, bits of landscapes, heads of animals, children at play, a child blowing soap-bubbles, &c. To give an air of substantial comfort to the apartment, a bright fire flamed in the grate, tempering the air to summer heat.

It was from such a home as this that the delicate lad was to be removed to a house of business.

It is scarcely to be wondered at that his relatives expected the change would prove fatal to him.

While the boy's grief was at its height, the door softly opened, and a little curly head was thrust into the room.

"Are you here, Regie?" asked a sweet voice.

Reginald's sobs prevented his hearing the question.

After a moment's waiting for a reply, the owner of the voice and curly head entered the chamber, and paused a moment, gazing in surprise at the occupant of the couch.

The new comer was a girl of about nine years—one of those lovely children rarely seen out of pictures. Her complexion was delicately fair and quite transparent. Her eyes looked like "wells of light" shining through darkness. Her lips were of a cherry hue, and her teeth were white, tiny, and regular. Her hair was cut quite short, and covered her head with tiny rings of curls, which gave her an infantile appearance. She was short in stature and exquisitely slender, and her movements were full of childish grace.

Her name was Willa Heath.

Her mother had been the favourite school-fellow of Mrs. Reid Westcourt, had married, lost her husband and wealth together, and dying soon after, had bequeathed her daughter as a sacred legacy to the merchant's wife. The penniless little Willa had been received into the merchant's family as a companion to his daughter, and for some time she had served as a sort of slave to the caprices of Miss Oriana. She had found, however, an earnest friend and champion in Reginald, whose chivalrous instincts were aroused in her behalf, and the boy and girl were never so happy as when reading together, or planning their future when both should be grown up. They were in the habit of sitting hours together before the bright fire in Reginald's room, much to the envy and jealousy of the boy's cousin, who was generally excluded.

Willa had, of course, noticed the deference with which the lad had been always treated by his relatives, and she had grown to regard him as a superior being, quite above the annoyances and griefs that beset her childish lot. Her astonishment was therefore great on witnessing his emotion.

She hesitated, with natural delicacy, whether to retreat from the room, or make her presence known. Her love for the lad, which was the great sentiment of her existence, prompted her to the latter course, and she advanced to his side, flung her arms around his neck, and laying her little cheek to his own flushed, tear-wet face, exclaimed:

"Oh, what is the matter, Regie. Are you sick?"

The boy started as he felt her embrace, and sobbed out.

"Oh, Willa! I am so miserable!"

"Why, what is the matter, Regie? Can't you have a pony?"

The lad almost smiled at the simplicity of the question. A pony seemed of very small consequence at that moment.

"Oh, it isn't that, Willa," he exclaimed, with renewed grief. "But I must leave you! I shall not see you again for years—uncle said so. You will forget me—"

"Why, where are you going?" asked Willa, opening her eyes to their widest extent. "What makes you go, Regie? Is your uncle going to send you to school?"

"No, he is going to put me into his house of business. I'm to be a tradesman, when he knows I hate buying and selling, and all that."

"I wouldn't go, Regie, if I were you. Why don't you tell him you don't like it, and you must stay at home?"

"It would do no good. He is hard and stern this morning. I never saw him so before. No, I must go, Willa. And I shall never see you again—"

"Oh, yes, you will. You'll come home every night with your uncle—"

"No, Willa," interrupted the boy. "I am to eat and sleep in the City. I am to leave this house for ever."

"Then I'll come and see you," was the reply. "You'll always love me as you do now, won't you, Regie?"

The boy replied by clasping her in his arms, and covering her face with kisses.

"I shall always love you more than anyone else in the world," he said. "But you are so small—you will forget me."

"If I am small, my memory is big!" replied Willa, earnestly. "I shall never, never forget you, Regie. I have got nobody in the world but you. Your uncle never notices me, or speaks to me; your aunt doesn't love me or say much to me, only to bid me to do as Oriana says. And Oriana isn't kind to me. You are my only friend, dear, dear Regie! Oh, I can't have you go!"

The tears she had striven bravely to repress burst forth, and Reginald endeavoured to soothe her.

"We shall not part for ever, Willa," he declared. "I shall come back some day, and take you away from this house. Will you go and live with me when you are older?"

The girl assented.

"And will you be my little wife, Willa? And I will give you a nice house, and take care of you, and we'll never be separated."

Willa expressed her joy at this arrangement.

"My uncle says that I am poor," continued the lad; "but I know better. I have got money, and he wants to keep it. If I were poor, why didn't he give me a little cold back room at the top of the house like yours?"

He spoke with kindling eyes, and a stern, resolute manner that seemed far beyond his years.

It was evident that he suspected the truth of the case, and that he possessed the determination of a man to get his fortune into his own hands in due time.

"I know you will, Regie!" exclaimed Willa, with enthusiasm. "You look now just like Jack the Giant Killer in the picture, and he killed the old giant, you know. And you will get back your money, and you and I will have a pretty house, and be as happy as the day is long, won't we?"

Reginald was cheered by her comforting words, and soon said:

"I must pack up my things now, Willa. If I leave them for the servants to pack, I shan't get half of them, for uncle will keep them. My fairy books and toys you may have. I have got to be a man now. Put them in your room to-day!"

He arose and drew out from an adjoining closet a large empty trunk, and into this he proceeded to pack his clothing, some books of history, and other equally useful works.

Willa assisted him, letting her tears fall with his into the box, yet striving to appear cheerful.

"Now, Willa," said the boy, arresting her busy movements, "I want to tell you something else. You know the doctor ordered me wine and nourishing food to make me strong?"

Willa nodded.

"Well," continued Reginald, with bitterness, "my uncle is going to allow me half-a-crown a day to live on. I almost think he wants me to die, for that won't buy wine."

"Oh, Reginald!"

"But I am going to disappoint him. I shall buy what the doctor ordered me. I shall drink wine every day, and live well. I have got money. My uncle has always given me plenty, you know."

"How much have you got?"

The lad drew out his purse and emptied its contents in his companion's lap. There were gold and silver, two or three bank-notes, and a few half-pence. The silver and copper he put in his waistcoat pocket.

"Let's count the money," he said. "There's the five-pound bank-note uncle gave me to buy a new chain with to put on the watch my mother left me. I kept the money, thinking that mother's chain would do, only it's a lady's chain, you know. And there's the ten-pound note aunt gave me to buy a music-box with for my birthday present. Then there's at least ten sovereigns in gold. I've got over twenty-five pounds, Willa!"

"Oh, how rich you are!" exclaimed the little girl, with delight. "You can almost buy your house now, Regie. I have got some money too, that my dear mother gave me before she died, a year ago. She told me to wear it in a little bag around my neck and always keep it, for I might need it some time. She told me never to tell anyone of it. But I know she would have liked you to know of it. It's a great fortune, Regie. Sometimes when Oriana calls me a little beggar I must want to show it to her. Look!"

She drew from her bosom a little leather bag, which was attached to her neck by a cord. The bag was carefully sewn up, and had evidently never been opened by the child.

"I'm most afraid to open it, Regie," she said, hesitatingly. "I saw my mother sew it in there when she was sick in bed. It's only one piece of paper, but it's worth ever so much! It's worth fifty pounds in gold!"

"You must take great care of it, then," said the lad, restoring his own money to his purse.

"No. It's for you!" cried the generous Willa, putting the bag, cord and all, in Reginald's purse. "It will buy you everything you want. You must keep it, Regie. You know you are going to buy me a house one of these days!"

The lad made some strenuous objections against accepting the gift, but he was finally overruled by the little girl, and declared he would keep it, but should never use it.

Willa then laid the purse upon his knee, from which it slipped, unobserved by either, as they resumed the packing, upon the floor.

The trunk was finally filled and locked, and the couple then seated themselves upon it, and proceeded to discuss still further their prospects.

While thus engaged, the door was thrust open, and Oriana Westcourt burst into the room.

She was about twelve years old and quite tall for her age. She had inherited the blue eyes and fair hair of her father, and although usually termed a "fine girl," could not be called prepossessing. Her face was insipid, thoroughly lacking character, and it usually wore a self-satisfied expression. Under her mother's injudicious training, she was becoming vain and insincere as well as heartless.

"Cousin Reginald, mamma wants you downstairs," she said, in a tone which lacked its usual respect to her cousin. "She says you are to hurry to the City immediately. Will," she added, "I want you to come to the nursery."

"Let Willa alone," said Reginald, quietly. "Go away, Oriana, for a little while. Please tell my aunt I am coming directly."

Oriana did not feel inclined to depart, but she stood in awe of her cousin, and thought it best to obey. When she had vanished, the lad arose, and said, in a choked voice:

"I must go now, Willa. I will say good-bye to you here. I know you won't forget me. Will you write to me sometimes?"

Willa sobbed assent.

"Bear up under Oriana's crossness, Willa, even if I am not here to protect you. Don't tell anyone, but always remember I shall get my fortune one of these days, and we will enjoy it together."

He drew himself up confidently, as if uttering a prophecy, and then bent over her and kissed her repeatedly.

"Oh, I can't let you go, Regie," cried Willa. "I'm afraid something will happen to you. Be very careful, so no one will hurt you. You must write to me, and I'll write to you. And I'll come to see you sometimes. And before long you'll be a man, Regie, and come and take me away from here."

Consoling themselves with their innocent hopes, though their childish hearts were almost breaking, they essayed again and again to bid each other farewell, but their arms clung to each other, and their lips repeated again and again the intended final kiss.

But the parting was at length over, and Willa sank on the floor in an agony of grief at the loss of her only friend, her tender playmate and confidant, while Reginald dashed from the room, his face convulsed with anguish.

He paused in the lower hall to calm himself before entering Mrs. Westcourt's morning-room, and when he did so, his face was unnaturally calm, his manner unnaturally composed.

"So you are off, Reginald?" said his aunt, looking at his thin flushed cheeks and bright eyes with a pang of self-reproach. "I see you are wrapped up well."

"Yes, aunt," replied the boy, with strange emphasis. "I want to get strong and well and live many years."

Mrs. Westcourt coloured, and regarded the lad attentively a moment, and then asked:

"Have you got your mother's watch with you?"

"I have."

"It's a costly toy for a merchant's apprentice to have, Reginald. You had better leave it in your uncle's care, and get a cheaper one. Still, do as you like," she added, noticing the compression of the boy's lips. "You know what omens to take. Your trunk shall be sent to you this evening. I hope you will try to merit your uncle's kindness, my lad, and be active and obedient."

She shook hands with Reginald, and would have kissed him, but he turned away without appearing to notice her intention.

Oriana, who was seated at a little distance, arose and extended her hand to her cousin, who touched it coldly with his gloved hand.

He then bowed to each, and said:

"Good-bye, Aunt Isabella and Cousin Oriana. It may be years before I see you again."

He turned, and Mrs. Westcourt felt a pang of remorse as she watched his slender figure as he left the apartment.

She believed that before the years he spoke of should elapse his form would have mouldered to dust.

Suppressing all expression of the grief with which his heart overflowed, and, renewing his stern determination to regain the fortune he believed rightfully to belong to him, Reginald Westcourt crossed his uncle's threshold and found himself in the bitter cold street. As he paused a moment to take a last look at the house, he beheld a little weeping face at one of the upper windows! It was the face of Willa, who desired to catch a last glimpse of her only friend. Reginald gazed at her a moment as if to impress the picture upon his memory, and then, blinded by his tears, hastened on.

(To be continued.)

THE POWER OF THE MIND.—The mind has many attributes, all closely connected with its every action; but the greatest of these is thought; for without it all the others would be entirely useless. Deprive it of thought, and it would be dead; give it that power, and almost instantaneously all other faculties spring up with sudden life, and man, the possessor of all—man, the temple at whose shrine, the mind, these priests are continually serving—is made a noble structure indeed. Who can conceive of the breadth or length of the immense field of thought over which the mind travels with the rapidity of lightning? It hardly rests for a moment upon a single object, when, without an effort, and almost without our knowledge, it speeds its course to another so far distant that the natural body never could follow it. Perhaps at first its flight is limited to some little spot in our own land, that holds some object dear to us; then, like the sea-bird, it flies over the ocean, never pausing till it reaches some foreign port. From there, it next wings its way to one of the distant planets, and seems to hold converse with another race, which we may imagine there holds undisputed sway. Onward, still onward, it hurries, with the speed of electricity, until the mind holds in its embrace the whole solar system, and even bows in adoration at the foot of the throne of the Most High.

SCIENCE.

HEAT OF THE EARTH'S INTERIOR.—Water will boil at the depth of 2,430 yards below the earth's surface.

WEIGHT OF AIR.—Pascal calculates that the air round our globe weighs 8,983,889,440,000,000,000 French pounds.

AN EGYPTIAN LOCK.—The earliest lock of which the construction is known is the Egyptian, which was used 4,000 years ago.

LIGHT.—In passing through pure sea water light loses half its intensity for each 15 feet through which it passes.

TEA AND CARBONIC ACID.—Dr. Smith has shown by experiment that the use of tea very largely increases the exhalation of carbonic acid from the lungs.

If a room were perfectly air-tight it is asserted that an orange could not be additionally thrust into it with the force of half a hundredweight.

THE DENSITY OF WATER.—It has been found that a claret-bottle filled with air and well corked and immersed in the sea was burst before it descended 400 fathoms.

THE POWER OF WIND.—Wind passing at the rate of one mile per hour is scarcely perceptible; while at the rate of one hundred miles per hour it acquires sufficient force to tear up trees.

LIGHTNING CONDUCTORS.—It is believed that the ancients were acquainted with the use of lightning conductors. M. Salvette expresses his belief that the Temple of Solomon was thus protected.

ROLLED IRON PLATES.—The Hercules plates are of rolled iron, and those of 9 in. in thickness are the largest ever yet manufactured for an English iron-clad, although plates of 13 in. in thickness have been rolled for the Russian Government.

TO PRESERVE IVORY CARVINGS.—The ivory carvings sent to England by Mr. Layard were found on their arrival to be crumbling to pieces. Professor Owen suggested that this was owing to the loss of the albumen, and advised boiling in a dilute solution of albumen as a remedy. This treatment was entirely successful.

EFFECT OF SEASON ON WEIGHT.—Season has an influence on the weight of man. Mr. Milner weighed the prisoners in Hull Jail for five years, and found that they regularly increased in weight from April to November, and decreased from November to March. The diet was the same all the year round, as was also the temperature.

THE HUMAN VOICE.—There are in the human voice about nine perfect tones, but 17,592,186,044,415 different sounds. Thus fourteen direct muscles, alone or together, produce 16,383, thirty direct muscles produce 173,741,823, and all in co-operation produce the above total, independently of different degrees of intensity.

PROPOSED ARTESIAN WELLS.—An engineer suggests that a lot of artesian wells should be sunk in London into a basin, instead of going to the expense of bringing water from a long distance. Within a radius of twenty-five miles round London forty stations should be found for sinking artesian wells and erecting pumping engines. At each station there should be two 30-horse power engines, with 18-inch pumps, which would pump up 2,600,000 gallons per diem. Forty such stations would furnish 100 millions of gallons pure water per day, raising the same to an

elevation to supply the highest points of London—say 400 feet. The average cost of wells, engines, and buildings would be £12,500; consequently, the whole undertaking would be £500,000. The daily working expenses of the forty stations would be £200, to which must be added interest on the whole outlay £68 9s. 10d. per day, making together £268 9s. 10d., which would be the total cost of supplying London with 100,000,000 gallons of pure water daily. The expenses, compared with the quantity of water supplied, would give 1d. as the price of 1,550 gallons.

OCEAN DEPTHS.—The deepest part of the North Atlantic is probably somewhere between the Bermudas and the Grand Banks. The waters of the Gulf of Mexico are held in a basin about a mile deep in the deepest part. Maury states that from the top of Chimborazo to the bottom of the Atlantic, at the deepest place yet reached by the plummet in the Northern Atlantic, the distance in a vertical line is nine miles.

HOW TO DRY GRAIN.—Mr. Nicholson, a Nottingham land-agent, makes what seems likely to turn out a good practical suggestion. Why not, he asks, dry our corn by sending through it currents of hot air of a temperature ranging from 100 deg. to 120 deg.? Timber, paper hangings, &c., are often dried in this way. From 10 to 15 per cent. of water can be taken out of wood by driving hot air through it at a hurricane rate, say 45 miles an hour. Corn can thus be treated without injury to its germinating power. Mr. Nicholson has proved this by experiment. The effect of the hot currents is very different from that of the dormant heat of a kiln: it only hardens the outer surface, rendering the grain less likely to reabsorb moisture. The corn can thus be dried on wire kilns if the air is set in motion. If we mistake not, some such process has long been in use in Russia; and though we do not often have a season like this, the complete farmer ought to be prepared with such apparatus instead of laughing (as our agricultural contemporaries think it witty to do) at the attempts of outsiders to help those who do not seem too anxious to help themselves.

COUNT BISMARCK AND THE SUFFRAGE.—Count Bismarck has not rushed into the manhood suffrage yet. It was perhaps a manhood subterfuge to tickle the Germans with. At any rate he has put off all thought of a German Parliament till the 1st of April, and then he will consider about it. We thought as much would come of his liberal notions; and it is, doubtless, a wise thing not to let the reins out of his hands; once in those of the people, and farewell to all his greatness and that of his sovereign master.

GARIBOLDI'S SWORD.—The sword which General Garibaldi presented to Colonel Chambers, who was instructor of musketry to the Italian Volunteers, is of English make, and was worn by the General through the campaigns of 1859, commencing with the expedition of the Thousand to Marsala. This sword was the same taken from the General after the disastrous episode at Aspromonte. He used the same weapon during the late campaign. The General, in forwarding it, wrote to Colonel Chambers, "In all the periods of the campaign you have been the true representative of the great and generous people of England."

ST. JOHN'S GATE, CLERKENWELL.—One week we hear of Milton's tomb being sacrificed, of Northumberland House and of Temple Bar coming down, &c. All the monuments of the past are, however, not gone, and perhaps one of the most interesting is the old gate of the Priory of St. John of Jerusalem, in Clerkenwell. This has outlived the assaults of time, has escaped the demolition consequent upon the Reformation, and stood proudly erect in the midst of the great London fire whilst all around it was desolation and ruin, and it has escaped the mightier danger of modern times—the railway schemes. It was here that Dr. Samuel Johnson took up his abode before he was known as the great lexicographer; and after he became great, it was here that he used to spend his evenings in company with poor Oliver Goldsmith, his biographer, Boswell, the imitable David Garrick, Savage, Cave, and all the distinguished literati of that period. It was then a tavern, it is one now, and every room has some historical association connected with it. Hundreds of portraits hang around the walls, some of ancient knights and some of modern Freemasons. Paintings of the ancient Priory of St. John, to which this was the entrance, are shown, and everything from the cellar to the ceiling betokens extreme old age. Yet there is no decay visible; the old oak still wears on, and looks as if it would do so for centuries yet to come. The vaults below, it is true, exhibit innumerable cobwebs, but this shows their value for storing wine. The landlord takes great interest in keeping up the antiquity of the place, and he delightedly exhibits the ten feet thick walls in the cellar beneath, saying that he has no fear of old Father Time laying his hand there.



"SI, SENORITA, SI."

CHAPTER I.

"SHALL we go up to the Plaza this evening?" asked a fine-looking young gentleman, of French descent, addressing himself to an English youth of fair complexion, and beardless face.

"Just as you like," was the reply.

"Then the matter is made up, and we go, of course," rejoined the Frenchman; "for," added he, "I am never so well pleased as when I am in the Plaza, especially at evening, when the band is to perform there."

"But is there nothing else, Monsieur Delfosse, you take more delight in than to hear the strains of martial music blown from the throats of forty Spanish soldiers through their squeaking brass instruments? I think there is something else!"

"And pray, Mr. Beall, what is that something you are pleased to speak of?"

"Why, the dark-eyed Spanish senoritas, to be sure."

"Aye, you are right, quite right, Mr. Beall; I am, indeed, a great admirer of the fair sex. Well, well, I know of nothing more natural. By-the-by, Beall, I will show you to-night the prettiest face and loveliest form in all Santiago. By St. Louis! a very paragon of perfection."

"So do, Monsieur Delfosse; but mind you that I do not become your rival. I bow to but one shrine, and that is beauty. Hark you, Monsieur Delfosse, it were best I should not see your fair intended."

"Why, zounds, boy, this is nonsense! In truth, I'm no Spaniard, to be jealous-minded!"

"Only let me see your pale-faced beauty once, and you will alter your tone, I think, my good fellow!"

"Bravo! my English boy, bravo! My fair Isabel will look upon you as a schoolboy, or a candidate for church orders. Why, the dawn hasn't come yet!" laughed the Frenchman, passing his hand over the smooth face of his young friend. "Come, let us go."

"I'm ready."

The foregoing conversation took place on board the brig *Harkaway*, then lying at Santiago, in the island of Cuba.

The young Englishman, whom we have here introduced to the reader, had taken passage to the West Indies in the said brig, for the benefit of his health, which had become impaired by too close application to books and lack of physical exercise.

[THE MEETING BETWEEN ISABEL AND DON MANUEL.]

Monsieur Delfosse was a Frenchman, originally of Paris; but for the present engaged as an agent for a large mercantile firm in Bordeaux, connected with a branch at Santiago.

The *Harkaway* had been at the latter place for nearly two months, being detained longer than usual on account of some difficulty pertaining to the shipping of her cargo of sugar, purchased by the consignees from the owner of a plantation at some distance from Santiago, known as the Braganzas.

Delfosse, from the nature of his business, was a fine linguist. English, next to his own, was the language he most admired, and he sought every opportunity to indulge in the pleasurable intercourse of ideas with those who could speak that tongue. Consequently, when the *Harkaway* first made her appearance in the harbour of Santiago, he sought an acquaintance with Beall; and he on his part was no less happy to meet thus early a friend who was ready to help him through the embarrassing incidents occurring to a man on his first visit to a strange land, and who was withal a most agreeable, refined, and intellectual companion.

It is not a subject of wonder, therefore, that they then and there began to cultivate the growth of an intimacy of a character both deep and lasting.

They had often been together in the Plaza, in lengthy rambles through the flowery vales of that summer-land, and at complimentary parties given to the commanders of ships of different nations.

In a word, they were constantly together.

A stronger intimacy on so short an acquaintance was, perhaps, never before known. What was the pleasure of one was the joy of the other. Their appreciation of things was of a similarity the most remarkable; while a congeniality of sentiment and affection combined to form a singular coincidence in their dispositions.

To all outward appearance, however, there was great disparity in form and feature. The Frenchman was tall, slender, and somewhat thin of flesh. The Englishman was rather below the medium height, but well made and active. The Frenchman had black, piercing eyes, and hair of the same colour. The Englishman had brown hair, and eyes between a hazel and a blue, sometimes denominated gray, but quite indefinable. The complexion of the Frenchman was a light olive, while the Englishman's was fair and spotless.

We have said the brig was lying at Santiago da Cuba. This place, although uninviting to a resident of a more northern clime who has been accustomed to visit cities of modern growth, is nevertheless a place of no mean importance, considering its situation

as regards climate, as well as its political disadvantages. It ranks among the most ancient settlements. The harbour, in fact, was named by the renowned discoverer himself.

Prior to the great insurrection in San Domingo it was a place of small importance. When the French people of that then flourishing but now almost barbarous island were driven from the smoking ruins of their once peaceful and happy homes, they fled to Santiago.

By them coffee was introduced. Its cultivation soon extended over that part of Cuba. About this time sugar also began to be made and exported; so that thenceforth the place has been gradually improving, until it now commands a respectable trade with many foreign countries.

Beneath the shadow of a jutting promontory on the right, bristling with cannon, and looking as impregnable as a second Gibraltar, and within a stone's-throw of a slanting mountain on the left, is the entrance of the harbour.

Ten miles from its mouth it forms a basin at the foot of the famous Copper Mountains, where, crouched among the rolling hills and flowery vales that rise between the margin of the water and the blue sloping sides of the Cobre, is the city itself, with its cathedral, its beautiful squares, and, last but not least, its lovely women.

In the midst of the city, and surrounded by the Governor's palace and other important buildings, is the Grand Plaza.

To this place, in the cool of the evening, resorts a vast crowd of the fashionable of either sex and every age.

A band of military musicians performs from seven until eleven, for the amusement of those present, and everybody seems to have a holiday. Here may be seen the rich old Castilian with his jewelled senora, the dark-eyed beauties of the isle, the naval officers of different countries, and the consuls of all nations, with their families.

There is no gayer scene; yet the grave and polished Spaniard, never smiling, moves about in the midst of all this grandeur with as much gravity as if acting in a pantomime.

All day long the hot sun pours down his molten rays upon the tile-clad roofs of the low-built houses, within whose painted walls, draped in thinnest gauze, the fair damsels of this Southern clime repose.

And when the strong sea-breeze has ceased to drive the dust through the narrow, unpaved streets, and the cool, light air of evening comes down from the lofty mountains, floating through aromatic vales

where the fragrant red rose and heliotrope bloom side by side, where the orange-blossoms, and the rich, ruddy fruit itself hang pendant with the perfumed dew of evening—then they come forth from the shining stars to revel in the splendour of this magnificent scene.

"What think you of our city, Mr. Beall?" asked Delfosse, just as they seated themselves in front of a delightful fountain, that was sending a perpetual shower among the foliage of a broad-leaved palm-tree that grew in the centre of a square.

"It is a fine place, my friend. I have never seen the Plaza so interesting before."

"I swear," said Delfosse, "I had rather enjoy this than a great day in Paris. See, see," he continued, after a momentary silence, touching Beall's arm—"see, there on the right!"

Beall turned his head in the direction indicated.

Three ladies were approaching.

At the distance of thirty feet one could not perceive any difference in the features of any of them; but on a nearer approach there was no mistaking the vast superiority in point of loveliness which the one on the right possessed.

"There," said Delfosse, as they passed, "they are sisters. Now, can you tell me which is the prettiest?"

"As easily as I can tell the moon from the stars!"

"Your choice is she on the left," said Delfosse.

"Ah, you jest," replied Beall. "Though let her be yours. Mine is on the right."

"She is forbidden fruit," said the Frenchman, smiling significantly.

"What do you call them?" inquired the Englishman.

"Grinan," was the reply.

"And by what names are they designated?" continued the inquisitive Englishman.

"The one on the left is Doloretta. Next to her is Magdalena. She on the right is Isabel."

"Isabel! Ah, yes, I remember," ejaculated Beall, his eyes following the retreating damsel. "May we not go after them?" he asked, rising from his seat.

"Oh, yes," replied Delfosse, rising also.

"And accompany them?"

"By no means, Mr. Beall."

"Why not?" questioned Beall, looking the Frenchman in the face.

"It is not our custom here. Young ladies are not seen in public with gentlemen, unless they be members of the family."

"Not even a lover?"

"Not even a lover!"

"At least one recognized as such?"

"No; that neither. An engagement is not sufficient to entitle one to the privilege."

"Fahaw! Delfosse, you trifle again."

"Indeed I do not. I am candid in what I tell you concerning this etiquette of ours. But step up, or we shall soon be out of sight of the three belles of Santiago."

"I shall never be out of sight of Isabel of Santiago, though the mist of years should rise between us. Her light is like that of the fixed stars, capable of enduring ages after its source has ceased to be. But how strangely you spoke just now of your conventional rules of society!" continued Beall, after a slight pause.

"To you, perhaps, it is," said Delfosse. "But to a Spaniard it is not so. His wife, like Caesar's, must not only be guiltless, but above the suspicion of guilt."

"Then I fear your women lack a firmness of moral character; for restraint not only fosters desire, but it is an inveterate enemy to fortitude," rejoined the other.

"Which, happily, they have no occasion to exercise," eagerly put in the Frenchman; "for," continued he, "better is it never to contend than to contend and fail."

"Which might do," argued Beall, "if the world were a convent, or mankind dead to the inspiration of love."

"Of passion, you should have said. But see, we are already too far behind to follow those girls. We have lost them entirely."

"By no means," said Beall; "I'd sooner lose the sun in summer. There they go into that showhouse."

"Yes, the panorama. Shall we follow?"

"Of course. Here are quatro reales, that is sufficient to admit us both."

They went in. The show consisted of views very aptly arranged in octagonal boxes, and represented some of the finest works of art and sublime natural scenery in the world.

The room being small, and only a few persons present, the two young men had an admirable opportunity of observing the ladies; the only thing, in fact, for which they had paid their money at the door.

Beall was perfectly charmed. It was not with Doloretta, or with Magdalena; it was with Isabel.

"Great heavens!" he exclaimed, in English. "What loveliness!"

Isabel, who was standing near, started at the sound of a different language from her own, and turned full towards the stranger; her soft, dark eyes swimming in a sea of limpid beauty; her thin lips just marked by a line of crimson hue, parting slightly, displayed a row of pearly teeth; behind her ears, and loosely bound upon her snowy neck, her hair, not brown nor black, but beautifully dark, was secured with silver darts and golden pins. She wore only a veil upon her head; and her dress of airy silk, with jewelled bodice, gave her the *tout ensemble* of a queen. There are scenes too grand to copy, feelings too deep to express, loveliness too excessive to describe. Such was the scene, the feelings, and the picture with the Englishman.

He was not in love. No, for this was the first sight. But he was enraptured—paralyzed—lost in amazement. There was in the woman before him such a stately carriage, such graceful movements, such a moving, breathing, living expression of excellence, shining through her classic face, that for a moment he forgot all things terrestrial, and fancied that, instead of Cuba and Santiago, he had sailed into another world.

CHAPTER II.

Poor Beall was in a trance. He turned away his head, but the beaming of Isabel's countenance still haunted his brain.

Like the eye, which, after looking intently at the sun, still retains his fiery image, look whithersoever it may, so to his metamorphosed vision appeared the dazzling glory of her face.

How was it with his heart? Was the impression superficial, or was it deep, and of a character calculated to endure?

How shall we answer?

If we say it was, you will call it love, and tell us we record fiction, and not truth.

But say what you will, the depths of his soul were penetrated; and like a tree around whose sturdy trunk the scathing lightning had ploughed, in whose blighting furrow no sap can grow for years and years, if ever; so was touched the heart of James Magruder Beall.

Delfosse excusing himself, left our love-stricken hero, and advanced towards the ladies, saluting them.

"Senorita," said he, in a low tone, in Spanish, to Isabel, "I am most happy to see you."

"Thank you, senor," she replied.

"Lady, I hope you are well this evening?"

"Very well. And you, senor?"

"Most happy, indeed, my fair Isabel; for where you are there can be no sorrow."

"Who is that stranger—friend of yours?"

"An Englishman—Senor Beall. He is visiting Cuba on account of his health."

"He is handsome, I think," said Isabel, turning her head towards Beall.

"I will introduce him at your house to-morrow evening."

"Thank you, but I have an engagement. I shall go to mass in the morning, and in the evening I meet a friend."

"A lover?"

"By no means."

"Whom?"

"Nonsense, senor. Are you jealous?"

"Not at all."

"Then bring your friend the evening after next. We shall be glad to see you."

The other two girls came up at this time. After a few pleasant remarks with Delfosse, the trio bowed smiling "adios" to the good-bye of the former, and left the room.

"They are gone," said Beall to himself, with a sigh.

"You must pardon me for not presenting you," said Delfosse, turning round towards his friend. "It is not our custom to present strangers anywhere but at home."

"I understand," replied Beall.

"I promised Isabel to take you up the evening after next."

"You will be doing me a great favour. Shall we go down to the brig?"

"Why so early?"

"I am tired, and feel a little unwell."

"Won't you stay with me to-night?"

"I would, but the captain expects me on board."

"Then I must excuse you."

"If you will not go with me?"

"Not to-night. Remember our appointment."

"It were impossible to forget."

"Buenos noches," said Delfosse.

"Good-night," replied Beall.

It was night again in Santiago. In the Calle de San Carlos—a dark, narrow street leading in from the country towards one of the main thoroughfares of the city—were long trains of pack-mules coming in from

the mountainous wilderness beyond, laden with coffee and sugar.

Silently they passed in the darkness, with now and then a driver sitting sideways on palm-leaf saddle-bags, in which was stored his scanty breakfast.

Mule after mule passed along, sometimes with the nose of one fastened to the tail of another, until hundreds had entered the city. The shrill voice of the last arriero, speaking to his mules, died away near the hour of eleven, when the heavier tread of horses might have been heard entering the long, narrow street.

Five men, mounted like cavaliers, were passing along. Their wide-brimmed sugar-loaf hats of palm were bound with ribbon. The frock-like latouse was confined to the waist with a belt, and their feet, instead of being clad in light and fancy gaiters, were incased in heavy boots, attached to the heels of which were spurs of brass that jangled at every step.

On they passed, walking briskly until they reached a dark wall, in the side of which was a tall door. Here they halted. The foremost man dismounted; and leading his horse to the door, gave it a kick with his foot.

No answer being made, he kicked again and again, the last time accompanying the motion with an oath. The slow, dragging footsteps of someone within seemed to be approaching, and the impatient horseman cried out, in a hoarse voice:

"Perdition seize your lazy soul, Pedro; open this door! Will you sleep for ever?"

The rattling of bars and the drawing of bolts were the prelude to an admission, and in a second the whole five men rode through the door into an open yard beyond. This yard was a kind of court surrounded by walls on every side. It was small, not occupying, perhaps, more than the area of half an acre.

On the left side of the entrance was a door which led into a stable, and on the right another which led into a low, dirty-looking kitchen, through which might be seen a room fitted up in a better style, and which appeared to be a habitable apartment.

Pedro was an old Croole, dark and swarthy—his shirt-collar being thrown open, displayed a breast both brawny and scarred. His hair was long and black, and his only remaining eye peered through his shaggy brow like that of a beast of prey.

"Don Manuel is fretful to-night," he remarked, as he shut the door.

"A saint would swear at your slothfulness, Pedro. Do you think it polite to keep gentlemen two hours at your gate before you ask them to walk in?"

"I have something else to do besides standing at my gate like a turnkey," murmured Pedro, half audibly.

"Silence!" spoke Don Manuel, in a commanding voice. "Take the horses to the stable, and give these cavaliers some chocolate," he continued, speaking like one who had authority.

Pedro seized the reins of all the horses and proceeded to do as Don Manuel had bidden; the other four following him to the stable, one holding a dark lantern. Don Manuel himself walked through the kitchen into the other apartment.

Don Manuel cast a scrutinizing glance around, as if he were looking for something not present. A shadow of disappointment flitted across his dark features as he exclaimed, in a pettish manner:

"Where is the girl? I say, Juanita!"

"Who calls?" answered a voice from a small room in the rear.

"A friend. Come and see. Haste thee, girl, I am waiting."

A young girl entered.

Her long white gown, her bare feet, her loose, floating hair, were all in good Spanish taste; but her bright blue eyes and light curling ringlets belonged to a clime more cold and a sky less blue than those of the great Antilles.

"Oh, a kiss, a kiss, my star-eyed muchacha!" exclaimed Don Manuel, with joy, stretching out his hands to catch her in his arms.

"You don't do that, senor. If that's your business you'll not accomplish your errand; so adios."

"Stop, Juanita. Sweet little muchacha, come back, I will be civil now. Did you deliver the letter?"

"I did," replied the young girl, coming back.

"And did you bring back an answer?"

"I did. She said you might come to-night."

"At what hour?"

"Midnight."

"That's a good girl. It is eleven now and past. I must begone. But kiss me before I go."

"Kiss her you love," replied the girl.

"I love you."

"You speak in earnest? If I thought you were in earnest, I would call my father."

"Go to, Juanita, you are mad to-night," said Don Manuel, as he went out at the street-door. Putting his heavy spurs in his pocket, and pulling his hat low down over his eyes, he walked towards the heart of the city.

As he began to emerge from the unfrequented lanes and byeways, through which he had come into the better-lighted streets, he eluded the least inspection of his person, and with a quick step walked on until he had come to a large house painted blue, situated in the Calle de Francisco, one of the principal streets of Santiago.

"This," said he, "is the house of Senora Grinan, and this is the entrance to the garden," he continued, pushing himself through a small doorway to the left of the main dwelling.

In a few moments he stood in the midst of fragrant flowers, fruit-bearing trees, statuary, and beautiful white fountains, which, as if in keeping with the general contour of the scene, were inactive, though, from the dripping of water from the boughs of the trees, and the dampness of the grass on the walk, they must have been in operation but a short time before Don Manuel appeared in the garden.

He took his stand under an orange-tree, and, like the dull, cold marble around him, seemed only an image of humanity.

In the cross street behind all was still, save now and then the rumbling of a volante, and from the house came no sound, except the slow tuning of a guitar, unaccompanied by any voice whatever.

Though midnight was near at hand, the hour appointed by Isabel Grinan for a meeting between Don Manuel and herself, yet the minutes passed like hours to him, and serious thoughts preyed savagely upon his mind.

In the southern part of Spain, in the house of his maternal grandfather, Don Ramon Cruz, along with Isabel, his cousin, he had been brought up. His parents dying, and Senor Grinan moving with his family to Cuba, Don Manuel went with them.

It was here that he gave himself up to evil influences, until the respectable patrimony of his sire was squandered, and until his habits became so detestable that he was expelled from the circle of his kindred.

Desperately in love with Isabel, his anger knew no bounds, and in less than six months his name was linked with all that is infamous and degrading.

About this time Senor Grinan died, and the unhappy man once more attempted to gain admittance to the house of his aunt. But she, as might have been expected, did not hesitate to forbid the entering of an outlaw into her heretofore respectable domicile.

In view of these facts, Don Manuel had petitioned for an interview with the love of his boyhood, which she, almost contrary to his most sanguine hopes, had granted.

The heavy bell tolled out the hour of twelve. "This is the hour," said Don Manuel. At that instant a light footstep came tripping down the aisle from the house.

"My sweet Isabella!" he exclaimed, with unmingled rapture.

"My cousin," was the calm reply.

"Let me thank you from my heart for this favour, my dear girl. Thou art not afraid to meet me at midnight, when the bravest in Santiago would quake to behold me in the day."

"I can never be afraid of my kinsman, Don Manuel. Yet I hate to think thou hast made thyself a terror to thy fellows."

"What makes thee sorry, Isabel?"

"If nothing else, the remembrance of by-gone days. With you were passed the happiest hours of my life."

"I thank thee, jewel, for these words!" exclaimed Don Manuel, with emotion. "'Tis of those days I have come to talk with thee."

"I thought as much," said Isabel; "and as our time is brief, speak on."

"Once more I seek your hand in marriage."

"Don Manuel, hear me, and let this be my final answer. This meeting must be our last!"

"Holy Maria! take back that word, or stab me to the heart and let out my life. Think, senorita, of by-gone years. Think of the convent-days of Idleness. Call to mind how, on the banks of the fair Guadalquivir, I gathered sweet flowers and crowned the queen of love and beauty. Oh, Isabel, Isabel, take back thy hasty words!"

Don Manuel bowed his head in his hands, and tears of anguish choked his utterance.

"Chide me not, senor," said Isabel. "It is yourself, not I, who has severed us. In Spain you were honourable. In Cuba you are an outlaw. Dare you ask me to share a fate like yours? Would you take me from my mother's house and all its comforts to the wild caverns of the mountains and the dark recesses of the forests, to be an associate of outlaws?"

"But, Isabel," pleaded the desponding lover—"but, Isabel, I will renounce my companions; and where we grow up together there will we go; and peace, security, and happiness shall be ours."

"Cease, Don Manuel; your dreams are vain. Go, and, if you can, tear yourself away from your vile

companions and become a better man. But know thou, that there can never exist any tie between us other than that which nature owns. Isabel Grinan of Cruz can never, never wed an outlaw. Senor, you have heard."

"Yes, senorita, and I heed. Go from me now. I can never harm thee; but woe be to him who shall call thee wife! Farewell."

"May heaven grant thee a better mind, Don Manuel," said Isabel, with a sigh, as she clasped his hand and left him.

Until her form was lost to view, he gazed after her with all the anguish of soul of a drowning man who has been left to perish by the heartlessness of a passing vessel.

And when she was gone he clenched his teeth and left the garden. Two hours afterwards, and the five horsemen were galloping rapidly towards the mountains to the north of the city.

(To be continued.)

OLIVER DARVEL.

CHAPTER VI.

"So, your mulish obstinacy has completed the separation between us. I am aware that you refused the man I chose for you, and in so doing you knew that you severed the last tie that binds us together. Remember that you alone are to blame for our estrangement; had you acted differently, I would still have been a good father to you."

Mabel felt the deep injustice of this accusation, and she could not repress the retort that arose to her lips.

"After insulting the memory of my mother by giving her such a successor as you propose to do, it is not likely that you would long have kept on good terms with her child, even if she had sacrificed herself at your command."

Her voice broke, and she could say no more. A gleam of lurid anger flashed from Mr. Tilson's light eyes, and he sardonically replied:

"It is most fortunate for all concerned that you are provided for, Miss Tilson; for, after daring to speak to me so contemptuously of my future wife, you can expect no farther favours of me. I have sought my own happiness in my own way. It is useless to multiply words—the time has come for us to part, and I bid you good-bye now, for I have much to attend to this morning."

Mabel clung to the hand he coldly extended, and passionately cried out:

"Oh, pardon, pardon, if I have wounded or offended you. I should not have spoken as I did. Father, you cannot, cannot part from me without one embrace—one kiss of affection. Oh, I am so lonely, so desolate, that heaven alone can understand how much I suffer. You will visit me in my new home? you will not refuse me the occasional sight of your face beneath my own roof?"

Mr. Tilson extricated his hand, and moved towards the door; his face was as cold and impassive as if this appeal had not been made. He said:

"I will never consent to enter the house of my own daughter, unless my wife is also received on a footing of equality. When you can rid yourself of your absurd pride, and ask the future Mrs. Tilson to occupy a seat at your table, I may consent to come to you, but not before. You leave me in disgrace, and you cannot expect me to take an affectionate farewell of you."

The door closed on him, and she sat down, stunned by the certainty that she now indeed stood alone in the world, responsible only to heaven and her own conscience for her future actions.

A knock upon the door aroused her from the stupefaction into which she had fallen, and Jen came in to say that the carriage she had ordered was in waiting.

Mabel had placed the portrait of her mother, and a handsome dressing-case, which had been her property, where the eye of her father must have fallen on them as soon as he entered the room. She had intended to ask permission to remove them, but she remarked the contemptuous glance he turned on both, and this hardened her heart more completely against him than all that had gone before. She made up her mind to take them away with her without making an appeal to him on the subject, certain that if objections were hereafter made, they could be settled by the payment of their value in money.

She ordered the boy to take them out carefully, and place them on the front seat of the carriage. He proceeded to obey her, closely followed by Mabel, who hurriedly threw on her bonnet and shawl, to escape as soon as possible from the scene of the late interview.

Ruth, still in full dress, came to the door, and as her young lady passed her, she impudently said:

"Nobody cares about the picture goin' away, him's sure, but yer par promised me that 'ere dressin'-box, han' I don't think you have any right to take it away with you, Miss Tilson."

Jen paused, as if uncertain what to do, and Mabel, roused to extreme indignation, imperiously said:

"Woman! How dare you lay claim to an article that was the personal property of my mother? Sooner than know this case to be desecrated by your use, I would destroy it myself. Stand aside, and let the boy pass on. If my father wishes to give you a dressing-case, and cannot afford to pay for it, he may draw on me for the sum necessary, to save this one from your rapacious claim."

Awed by the white, indignant face, Ruth shrunk aside, and the banished daughter stepped into the carriage, sank back in an agony of emotion, and was driven for ever from the home of her childhood, while she who had accomplished this wrong stood exulting on its threshold, and hoping it was the last she should ever see of Mabel Tilson.

CHAPTER VII.

THE newspaper article which had so deeply moved Oliver ran as follows:

"We chronicled a few days since the probable suicide of a young man found in a low den near the water-side, who was identified as Mr. Oliver Darvel, the nephew and heir of a wealthy London tradesman who had retired from business."

"Had Mr. Darvel lived only a few days longer he would have found himself the possessor of an ample fortune, for the uncle on whom he was dependent is dead, and his will revealed the fact that he had bequeathed to Oliver Darvel sixty thousand pounds in stocks, and a beautiful marine villa, for which he had recently paid twenty thousand more."

"By the suicide of the heir, the estate devolves to his cousin, Miss Mabel Tilson, the daughter of John Tilson, of Greenwood Cottage, near London; and we understand that the heiress has already taken possession of her new inheritance."

Oliver read over these lines till he knew every word by heart, yet he could scarcely comprehend the changes they announced. His uncle dead, and Mabel rich in the possession of the inheritance that should have been his own, while he had made himself an outcast from all he held dear by the fatal error he had committed.

Oh! it was too—too much to be borne! What could he now do? whether turn to place himself in a true position towards the world once more?

Alas! the more he thought the more impossible he found it to accomplish that. How should he dare to appear before Mabel, avow the fraud he had practised, and claim from her the restitution of what had been bequeathed him? By his own act he was dead in law, and if he dared to attempt to prove his identity he rendered himself liable to the criminal charge of murder for the purpose of despoiling his victim of his possessions.

With a kind of dumb despair he felt that he could never right himself now, and all that remained to him was to effect his escape as soon as possible from the land in which he was no longer safe.

The yearning desire to see Mabel again took possession of his whole being; he would not dare to approach or speak to her, but he could at least gaze once more upon her, and then remove his broken and despairing heart for ever from her vicinity.

Then, taking every precaution to disguise himself, late one evening Oliver went to the waterside and engaged a wherry to take him to Fernely. The boatman said:

"I know the place very well, sir. The new lady, they say, is a very nice person. Maybe you're a relation, sir?"

"Yes, I am a connexion of Miss Tilson."

Having thus spoken, Oliver sank back upon the seat and gave himself up to the dreary and self-accusing thoughts that crowded on his mind.

The boat glided smoothly over the darkening waters while these bitter musings passed through his mind; lights gleamed out on the banks of the stream, and after half an hour of vigorous rowing the boatman slackened his speed a little, and again began to speak of the new mistress of Fernely.

"It'll not be long now, sir, afore we comes to the place you're a going to. 'Twas lucky for the young lady that that cousin o' hers went and shot his head off. Ef it hadn't been for that, they do say that she'd never have got a penny of the fortune. It were all left to him, and to her art-rward, ef he left no heirs. Some folks is mighty lucky in this world."

Oliver vaguely wondered if Mabel viewed her new accession to fortune in this light.

In his eagerness to find out all that could be known of Mabel's affairs he ignored the wide social gulf between himself and this humble stranger.

"Mabel is a woman who will perform her duties, and in the new life to which she will now be introduced she must soon cease to remember me, save as the object of her early care and affection. I shall need her, but she will not need me; so she will forget, while I shall for ever remember and regret. Oh, that I could only have foreseen what was in store for me, and played the part of a man when my unhappy friend destroyed himself. He meant to aid me, but his unfortunate legacy has proved my ruin: nor do I yet know all that legacy involves. Should this Brauner yet track me—drag me from my concealment and proclaim the fraud I have practised—it chills my heart to think what might be the result."

"Here we are, sir. This is Fernely, and a beautiful place it is."

He paid and dismissed him, and then leisurely ascended the steps and looked around. In summer, with its wealth of shade and numerous flowering vines and plants, he could very well believe that Fernely wore the semblance of a fairy paradise; even in its autumn garb, Oliver thought it the most beautiful place he had ever seen, and a pang rent his heart at the thought that it might have been his own, with the tender love of the only woman on earth that he should ever care to claim as his own, had he only acted up to the standard of right he knew existed in her mind.

But that dream was dead and buried, and he only stood there to survey her possessions, to gain a last glimpse of her beloved face, before he went away to hide himself from her for ever.

The blind had been left unclosed, and poor Oliver, almost stifling his breath, drew near and looked into the room.

A glowing fire burned in the handsome grate, and its warm reflections fell upon the crimson-covered furniture and the ruby-tinted carpet garlanded with flowers; and everything showed that the hand of taste, as well as luxury, had aided in fitting up that fair temple of light and beauty.

But at first Oliver scarcely noted these things, for his eager gaze was fastened on the figure of the black-robed girl who sat by a small inlaid table with two wax candles upon it. She held in her hand a roll of papers, which he at once identified as the manuscripts he had left scattered in Ledru's room.

Mabel had taken pains to claim them, and she meant to preserve them for his sake, was the thought that came to him, and with an effort he repressed the cry that arose to his lips—the yearning desire to rush in, clasp her to his heart, and proclaim that he yet lived—that he was all her own.

But it might not be. He had himself forged the fetters that bound him, and he must continue to wear them, even if the iron entered his very soul and corroded there.

Poor Oliver scanned the face of his cousin with that eager expression so often seen in the eyes of the dying, when taking their last look at the loved of earth.

Yet the tempter whispered, it was shameful that she should be surrounded by the luxury his nature craved, while he, through one single error, must surrender his birthright and wander through the world a banned and persecuted outcast.

Oliver's courage wavered before the misery of the lowering future. Why not make himself known—tell the whole sad story of his temptation and fall to Mabel—he would defy consequences, and risk all where so much was to be gained.

Summoning all his courage to his aid, Oliver was about to lift the sash and step into the room, when a heavy hand was laid upon his shoulder, and a stern voice whispered in his ear:

"What are you doing here, Eugene Ledru? your presence is needed elsewhere."

Oliver recoiled before this mysterious summons with scarcely less dread than he would have felt had the grim phantom, Death, laid his chilling hand upon him; he would have spoken—have cried out—but his tongue seemed paralyzed, and from his parched throat no sound would issue.

At the head of the stairs leading to the river another man stood watching and waiting. As they drew near, he spoke in an eager though guarded tone.

"So you've caught him, Gibbs? Bring him down quickly, for it is time we were on board."

Oliver made an effort to say:

"Gentlemen, for heaven's sake, let me go. I am not Eugene Ledru; my appearance should show you that I am a quiet, respectable citizen, attending only to my own affairs—and—"

"It's all right, my hearty, and this time I'm under the impression that if you don't make a clean breast of it, it'll be all up with you."

The prisoner was unceremoniously hustled into a boat which was waiting at the foot of the stairs. His two captors sat on either side, and the command was briefly given to the boatman.

"Why am I seized in this lawless manner? What have I done to deserve such treatment?"

"As if you didn't already know," was the contemptuous response. "We have followed you up since the day of the suicide, though I don't believe you killed the man. You had nothing to gain by doing it, and you couldn't afford to draw attention to yourself in such a way. You evaded the man set to watch you cleverly enough when you left the inn. But it occurred to me that you might have some message from the dead man to his cousin to deliver, and I kept a constant watch on her house. You fell into the trap so skillfully set, and now you will soon be brought face to face with the Blue Tiger. You have been threatened with him before, but now rely on it, you will be brought into his presence and questioned by him."

This information brought the cold drops to the brow of Oliver—he could scarcely have explained why—but he felt as if some mysterious and fearful danger menaced him, and from which he was utterly powerless to escape.

Oliver had made sufficient progress in his German studies to comprehend imperfectly the contents of a portion of the letters left by Ledru; but on a careful examination of the package, he discovered that many of them were written in a strange cipher, to which no key was furnished.

That the terrible Blue Tiger was the writer was very evident, but why it was so could not be discovered.

Oliver saw that resistance to his vigilant captors would be useless, so he wisely refrained from making any attempt to escape, which must have been instantly frustrated.

The boat passed London Bridge, threading its way dexterously among the numerous water-craft upon the river, and finally drew up beneath the shadow of an outward-bound ship that rocked upon the advancing tide, with a few sails set, as if making ready for immediate departure.

He was hurried below and locked in a small cabin, where he was left to his own reflections.

The ship ploughed her way to the channel, and on reaching the open sea found herself in a severe gale, which soon threw her out of her course. Oliver did not suffer from sea-sickness, but his mind was distracted by doubts and fears, and he almost wished that the strong vessel would go down, bearing with it his wrecked life and ruined hopes.

The storm subsided, the ship went on her course, and finally entered the port of Hamburg on a cold, misty morning in November.

A suit of dark gray clothing was brought to his door and thrust in, and Oliver found a paper pinned to the coat, on which was written:

"Resume your proper appearance, for your disguise is now useless. You have been recognized beneath it, as you always will be, assume what seeming you may. When such interests are at stake as those involved in the secret you have so tenaciously guarded, you may feel assured that the pursuit of you will never be given up till the end is attained, and vainly will you struggle against the craft and power arrayed against you."

"Go to any hotel you may prefer, live as you like. An invisible watch will be kept constantly upon you, and the moment you attempt to evade me your apparent freedom will be at an end. Then the Blue Tiger will surely sit in judgment upon you, and you are aware of old that his punishments are hard to be borne."

There was no signature to this strange epistle. Oliver pondered over his anomalous position, and seeing no means of extricating himself from it, he wisely concluded to make the best of it, and be guided in his future course of action by events.

He had himself fixed on Hamburg as his place of exile, and there he was, without any volition of his own. This permission to remain unmolested was so much more than he dared to anticipate that he felt half reconciled to the forcible manner in which he had been abducted, and he hastened to make preparations for going on shore.

After the disagreeable voyage he had made, Oliver was glad to find himself installed in a comparatively clean and quiet house, with a small room to himself, for which the charge was not exorbitant.

This was effected with the assistance of the dark, keen-eyed man, for Oliver's knowledge of German was too limited to serve him in such an emergency as the present one. But the stranger never left his side till he saw him safely established in his own room. Then, with a low bow, he significantly said:

"Remember—and beware."

With this warning he disappeared.

CHAPTER VIII

THE man who had accompanied Oliver Darvel to his inn lost no time in seeking the presence of his em-

ployer. He moved rapidly towards the outskirts of the City, and entered the extensive grounds surrounding a castellated mansion, which was evidently a relic of the feudal ages.

The massive walls were mossgrown, and in some places dilapidated by time and neglect, but one wing was more modern than the rest, and evidently kept in a habitable condition.

The low grounds around it were uninteresting, and badly arranged, and the visitor strode on beneath the shelter of the ancient trees without casting a glance upon the formal-clipped hedges, which had doubtlessly delighted some Dutch beauty in the palmy days of the old castle.

The expression on the face of the man was perplexed, yet half exultant, and more than once he muttered:

"I trust that my doubts may be verified; the poor wretch has been made to suffer enough already, and I hope this man may not prove to be the right one. What will Prince Ernest say to the course I have ventured to take, I wonder?"

The person who thus mused half aloud was a tall, well-formed man of thirty-five, with a handsome but subtle face, though there was nothing mean or cringing in his keen, dark eyes.

The expression his features wore was that of a man who was always on the *qui vive* to discover and understand what was going on around him.

Making many devious windings through the neglected shrubbery, he at length gained a private door. Here he paused a moment, as if collecting his thoughts before appearing in the presence of the person he sought.

As he lifted his hand to the lock, a most significant gesture gave a clue to the nature of his feeling towards the master he came to meet; the long, nervous fingers involuntarily clenched themselves, and he was in the act of shaking his fist at the wooden panels, when the door was suddenly thrown open with a crash, as if the person within had been long impatiently awaiting the arrival of him who was about to ask admittance to his presence.

The two confronted each other a moment in silence, and then the prince burst into a strange laugh.

He was a remarkable-looking man—a tall, stately figure, around which a brocaded dressing-gown loosely hung—features as clearly cut and as cold as those of a statue, all save his eyes; for in their light greenish-gray depths shone the reckless fire, the indomitable pride which were the characteristics of Prince Ernest of Berchtols.

Ice, steel, and flame seemed to be the elements of which this man was composed, and if he were the Blue Tiger referred to in poor Ledru's journal, Oliver had good cause to fear him.

The laugh that broke from his lips had no mirth in it, and ended as abruptly as it had commenced. Then two words fell from his lips, spoken in the German language:

"At last."

He imperiously motioned to his visitor to enter the room and close the door behind him. As he did so, heavy folds of gobelin tapestry, wrought in battle-scenes illustrating the history of the country, fell over and concealed the entrance. The furniture was antique and richly carved; it was covered with crimson velvet, and the curtains at the windows were of the same material, with fringes of tarnished gold.

A rich Turkey carpet covered the centre of the floor, on which stood an inlaid table that supported a breakfast service of Sèvres porcelain.

The luxurious sybarite who revelled in all this splendour seemed to have quite recovered his equanimity. He sank indolently into a large cushioned chair which stood in front of a bright fire, and lifting his jewelled meerschaum to his lips, he leisurely took a few puffs, while his eyes were inquiringly fixed on his companion.

"Well, what have you to report? Have you done my bidding?"

The person thus addressed bowed respectfully, and gravely said:

"I hope that I have accomplished what you commanded, my lord, but I fear that some mistake has been made. The person does not, in several respects, answer to the description of Ledru."

At this announcement, all the assumed indifference of the prince vanished; a vivid spot of scarlet, deepening almost to a purple hue, settled in a mark upon his left cheek, and he furiously cried out:

"Knave! rogue! how dare you come hither with so lame a story as that! Whom have you then brought, and why shall he not prove to be the right man? What do you mean, Herman, by coming to me with such a story as this?"

Herman coldly replied:

"Fate has saved you that trouble, my lord; he is dead. He was killed in a tavern brawl, or I should have had no difficulty in identifying the man."

Prince Ernest seemed to pay little attention to his last words. He cried, in a rage:

"The dog went and got himself into a fatal scrape just as I needed his services! I only wish he had lived long enough to let me get my grip on him once more—wouldn't I have paid him off! But what have you done with your prisoner, and why is he not brought before me?"

"If you will be so kind as to bridle your impatience a little, my lord, I will explain as briefly and lucidly as I can."

"There—go on—go on, for I am burning to know what you have really done."

"I set out for England to assist Brauner, as you already know. The next morning the fray happened in which he received his death-wound, and I got to him just in time to learn all he had done, and obtain such information as would enable me to follow up the clue to the best advantage. I employed an experienced detective, and with his assistance, after many delays, we found the person we were in pursuit of, and I succeeded in bringing him hither."

"What, then, can you mean about doubting his identity? Brauner, surely, could never mistake his man."

"But Brauner did not see him, remember. I think this is not the man, because Ledru has been described to me as a fellow of infinite resources and most daring courage. I apprehended much difficulty in keeping him after he was in my power, but my prisoner is a person of very different calibre. He has not the physical strength to struggle long, nor had he the sharpness to keep out of the trap the police set for him. Neither of these is characteristic of Ledru: yet if it be not he, who can it possibly be? For I have traced every step he has taken since he left his lodgings on the river."

"Oh! he is worn out with his battle against fate, that is all," was the careless response. "But having secured, what have you done with him, pray?"

"I trust that your highness will pardon me when I tell you that I have left him at the Alsterhaues, but under strict surveillance. He can no more escape from my emissaries here than he could while on board the ship that brought him over."

The threatening look returned to the gleaming eyes of the prince, and he ominously said:

"Take care, Herman; it will be the worse for you if you do not keep him safe this time. But why the devil did you give the wretch so much freedom?"

Herman bowed again, as if fully understanding the responsibility he had incurred, and he respectfully said:

"I thought it best to risk nothing, my lord, for if this be not the right man, it will not be well for him to get an inkling of the cause of his abduction. Brauner told me that Ledru always carries with him a pocket-book, in which the letters sent him by the duchess are kept, and from them we can learn the asylum chosen for the child. If these be found on my prisoner they will conclusively prove that we have secured the right person."

"Then why on earth didn't you at once examine him, and see what the result would be?"

"I intended doing that as soon as we had landed, and I could convey him to a safe place. But I had the means of keeping up a watch on him while he was on shipboard, and serious doubts arose in my own mind as to this young man's identity with Ledru. With this conviction in my own mind, I considered it best to give him as little cause of complaint as possible, till we are satisfied that he is in possession of the accusing documents."

"Hum! And what do you propose to do next?"

"I have employed dextrous Hans, of whom you already know something, to keep a constant watch upon him, to win his confidence, and get possession of the papers by any means he may consider best, without using violence, or to satisfy himself that they are not in his possession."

The lip of the listener curled contemptuously as he said:

"I cannot see the need of all this forbearance towards a churl who could be mistaken for Ledru, even if he should not prove to be the same. You are over squeamish, Herman, and now that Brauner is gone I am afraid that my plans will come to naught through your mismanagement."

"I trust not, my lord. I always endeavour to act for the best, and after a thing is settled you have often complimented me on my dexterity in getting it well done."

"That is true enough; a good hit, by my faith! But I am impatient. I want something to stir me up, and if this affair be speedily settled, Herman, your fortune is made. My uncle cannot last much longer, and when I am Elector of Lichtenfels you may name your own reward."

Herman bent his head, as much to conceal the singular expression that swept over his dark face as to evince respect for his master's promise.

"I will do my best to serve your interests, my lord."

"Well, well; I trust all to you. You are over careful, but be sure that you do not lose your hold on this man before you are convinced that he is not Ledru. But if he prove to be another person I shall be ready to take your head off for making a mistake in a matter of such vital importance to me."

"If a mistake have been made, my lord, I will repair the error by seeking Ledru till he is found, and wringing his secret from him."

With this assurance, at a sign of dismissal from the prince, he disappeared behind the tapestry.

Prince Ernest then reflected on what he had heard. A door was heard to close behind him.

His face assumed its most repulsive expression as thought deepened. The true nature of the man was laid bare in those moments of silent reflection—selfish, unscrupulous, daring, he let nothing stand in the way of the accomplishment of anything he had at heart.

Standing in the direct line to a magnificent inheritance, by which both money and political power were to be attained, but one feeble and insignificant life stood between him and his possession.

Could a young child be removed from his path, he must become Elector of Lichtenfels at the decease of his uncle—an event that could not be much longer deferred by the course of nature.

But the mother of that child had become aware of her danger, and she had caused her offspring to be spirited away, in some mysterious manner, by the man he was so anxious to get in his power.

Should he prove to be Ledru, death or the betrayal of his trust should be his only choice; and as Prince Ernest arrived at this decision, the purple mark upon his cheek assumed its darkest hue.

It looked as if a strong hand had laid its fierce grasp upon the flesh, and for ever left the discoloration of a deep bruise upon its surface. When calm the mark was scarcely discernible, but the slightest excess of passion caused it to assume a livid bluish tint, and the cruel flash of the greenish-gray eyes above it told that the *sobriquet* of the Blue Tiger was well deserved.

(To be continued.)

A HARD LIFE.

MATTIE EMPSON felt, when her mother died, that she was indeed alone. In all this great world she had not, as far as her knowledge extended, one relative, except some very distant connexions, whom she had never seen, and of whom she had hardly ever heard.

She was as destitute of friends as she was of relatives. There were a few left whom she claimed as acquaintances, but there was not one whom she could look to and depend upon as a friend.

You may say that it was her own fault that she was friendless; that she would have had friends if she had deserved them; that there must have been something repellent in her disposition, which prevented her from receiving sympathy.

Perhaps so; perhaps her nature was faulty, but it had been born and brought up in her, and it was not to be expected that she would change it easily. I know, also, that her isolation was due, in a great measure, to circumstances, which are very apt to baffle and balk our best efforts and resolves.

Her father had failed in business, and had done worse; he had proved a defaulter to a large amount, and there were circumstances connected with the default that would have consigned him to a felon's cell if he had not been saved from that disgrace by the compassion of those who were losers by his fraud.

His disgrace was sufficient, however, to send him out of the world. His fall was so great that it killed him.

Shame and remorse and misery preyed upon him until he pined away and died. His gentle wife soon followed him. She had not strength enough to struggle with grief and poverty, nor sufficient buoyancy to rise superior to her misfortunes; and at last, with a sigh and a groan, her sad spirit passed to where the weary are at rest.

Mattie Empson was left alone, and she had little time for reflection before she was compelled to decide the great question what she should do, for she was pressed immediately for payment of the expenses of her mother's sickness and burial, and was compelled to dispose of the small amount of property that remained to her.

The question was not one of choice; she was not called upon to decide what she had rather do, but to determine what she could do; it was very little at the best that she could do, for she had not been brought

up to do anything, and her first practical knowledge of the duties and labours of life was painfully gained during the toilsome and poverty-stricken hours of her mother's sickness.

If she had had time to reflect upon the matter, and to qualify herself for some pursuit, it might have been better; she might have made a choice by which she would have become contented with her lot, if not positively happy.

But she could not pause, she could not reflect, she could not prepare; necessity pushed her on, and she was forced to leap before she looked, to plunge in, accoutred as she was, to accept the first opportunity that offered itself.

She had been led to believe that she should never want for anything as long as she lived, that every wish would always be gratified, and that she would never be compelled to help herself by the use of either her head or her hands.

She had expected to grow in affluence, and finally to be married to some proper and wealthy person, who would support her in the style to which she had been accustomed—and her anticipations or aspirations extended no farther.

Consequently, she had never been taught one useful thing, and her hands and her brains were alike unavailable.

It is very fine, very easy, to advise people who have met with misfortunes and reverses to keep up their spirits, to bear it bravely, to hope on, to never say die, to go to work with a stout heart and cheerful mind; but it is easier to give the advice than to follow it.

If you have never learned to swim, and should be plunged suddenly into deep and cold water, your stout heart and cheerful mind would avail you very little, and you would find it difficult to keep up your spirits while your body was going down. Bear it as bravely as you might, you would soon exhaust yourself in useless buffeting.

Is it an easier thing for those who have never learned and practised the duties of life to take them up suddenly and perform them in anything like a proper manner or with anything like a cheerful spirit?

To a woman, certainly, the prospect of such a task is nothing less than appalling, and there are too many who see no path before them but one of deep disgrace.

Mattie Empson often wished that she had been born poor; for in that case she would have learned, at least, to use her hands to some advantage, and would not have been cursed with the enervation consequent upon her life of luxurious indolence.

She had been educated, it is true, but her education was that of a fashionable young lady, and what was it worth? She had a smattering of French, and a smattering of music, and perhaps a smattering of one or two other accomplishments.

It was necessary that her education, poor as it was, should be her bread-winner, and she had no time or opportunity to pick and choose the manner in which her small talents and acquirements might best be made available.

It was with gratitude, therefore, that she accepted a situation as an assistant-teacher in a public school. She could not have obtained even that if it had not been for the kindness of the physician who had attended on her mother.

The position was a very humble one, and the pay was very scanty; but Mattie bore up as bravely as she could, and performed her duties to the best of her ability.

Her fortitude, her patience, her industry, and her cheerfulness, were quite wonderful in a young lady nurtured as she had been; but they earned for her no praise or sympathy, as it was generally considered that a person who had enjoyed such great advantages ought to be more learned and accomplished than Mattie Empson was.

In fact, it was the hardest of her trials that she was looked down upon and despised by her associates—not because she had fallen from a high station, not because she had been rich and was poor, not because of anything connected with her parentage or her position, but simply because of her inefficiency. As this was very painful to endure, she strove to remedy her faults by correcting the defects of her early training. It was hard work and slow work, and it seemed as if it would never be rewarded.

She had fancied that literature was the usual refuge of distressed young ladies, when compelled to seek some means of earning their bread.

She had imagined that fame and fortune were ready to drop into the laps of literary aspirants; and she supposed that it would be as easy to write tales and sketches as the interminable letters that she used to inflict upon her schoolgirl friends.

She thought that by this means she could at last eke out her small pay, and contrive to live comfortably.

She soon discovered her mistake. She was neither

talented nor properly educated, and she had no life to write from.

Her existence had run in a single and uninteresting groove, until her one bitter sorrow had changed it. Her lucubrations remained unpublished, and her little income received no additions from that source.

Mattie Empson had not forgotten or abandoned matrimonial hopes and ambitions.

Every young woman who has been properly brought up expects to marry, and Mattie had her expectations, although they did not soar as high as they once had soared. It was not to be supposed that any very wealthy or lofty young gentleman would condescend to make love to the humble, plain, and not very bright young person who, at the age of twenty-five, was only an assistant-teacher in a public school. But Mattie was surprised and flattered by the attentions of just such a young gentleman.

She was soon in love, or thought that she was, and had reason to believe that her love was fully returned.

Whether she were really in love or not, she was gratified at the prospect of gaining a husband who would give her a home and a competence. She regarded this young gentleman as her property, and was so happy, for a while, in the possession that she abandoned her studies and neglected her duties.

She would have lost her humble situation if she had not been in time undeceived in regard to the character of her lover, who made such insulting proposals to her that her air-castles all tumbled down together, and she sat among the ruins in despair.

Being now done with love, and having gained a new and hard experience of life, she sought consolation in religion. She was not very religiously inclined; but she tried her best, not only to be morally good, but to gain that "awakening and conviction" that some consider essential to salvation.

She thought that she had gained it, and was about to be admitted to the fold, when an over-zealous elder arose in the congregation, and welcomed the lost sheep as the erring and repentant daughter of Richard Empson, the defaulter and swindler.

He hoped that the sins of the father would not be visited upon the child, and asked the prayers of all present that she might be able to reform and thenceforth lead a virtuous and Christian life.

This well-intended but heartless exposition, in which she was so cruelly connected with her father's crime, effectually quenched the young lady's religious longings. She was so deeply mortified and hurt that she left the church in tears, and never entered it again. Her religion thereafter was of a private nature, and her experiences were confined to herself.

When she was no longer known as Mattie, but plain Miss Empson, or Old-maid Martha, she had gained some experience, and had saved a little money, with which she started a small school of her own.

She then bethought herself of making some provision for her old age, as she had no other future to look forward to. To this end she laboured, pinched and saved, until, as years passed by, and her head was growing gray, she had laid by quite a snug little sum.

While she was debating whether it would not be well to invest it in a larger school enterprise, the savings' bank in which it was deposited failed, and it was all lost.

She was so broken down by this misfortune that she fell seriously ill, and found, to her sorrow, that she was still friendless, as well as sick and poor.

After she rose from her bed, and recommenced her monotonous and tiresome round of duties, she never again had good health, although she continued to toil, and pinch, and save, in order that she might be taken care of and properly buried when she should close her laborious, lonely, hopeless life; for she had no other ambition.

Was there not some bright ray of joy, some warm ray of comfort, to shine in upon such a shadowed and miserable existence?

Could not the clouds lift a little before the sun set for ever?

Must she die as she had lived, alone, and with no smile on her face?

A runaway boy, whom she had once befriended, came home a rich man, when she lay upon her death-bed.

He thought that he owed her a debt, and he wished to pay it, as far as wealth and affection would go; and he told her so as he sat by her bedside, and promised that she should never want for any blessing that the world could give if she would but get well again.

"It is too late," she murmured, as she sadly turned her head on the pillow and breathed her last.

I wonder if there is any compensation hereafter for such a life? E. W.

A MOVEMENT is on foot at Berlin to establish an asylum for the children of soldiers killed or disabled

in the late war. It is proposed that the Institution shall bear the name of the "Bismarck Foundation." No better name could be given, as Bismarck was the foundation of their bitter loss.

ZEHRA.

CHAPTER IX.

"Do you really mean that thing?" uttered Pedro Bambino, regarding his master with wondering looks.

"Upon my faith I do," returned the knight. "I believe I speak the truth."

"Then heaven bless us. I'll help you to the last drop of blood I've got."

"I don't doubt you, Pedro."

"You have no reason to. But now how shall this thing be done?"

"It's all arranged. Zehra will be ready to accompany us on the fourth night from this. Our horses are fleet enough, and I will see that a third is procured for her."

This conversation was held while the knight and his esquire were returning from their visit to the house of Ben Hamed. They had entered the street that led into the main portion of the city, and their conversation was dropped.

"Sir Charles, there's somebody watching us from the other side of the street," whispered Pedro.

The knight turned his head, and he could see, beneath the shadow of the high buildings opposite, someone who appeared to be regarding his movements with more than a passing interest. He quickened his pace—and so did the dusky form opposite. He slackened his steps—and so did his *vis-a-vis*.

"He's watching us, surely," said Pedro.

"I think I know that form," returned the knight. And as he spoke he stopped.

"Sh!" quickly uttered Pedro. "Are you mad, thus to expose yourself?"

"There's no danger."

"Yes, there is. You don't want to be known in this disguise. Come."

Pedro caught his master by the arm, but he was too late, for the stranger had already started to cross the street.

"Charles of Leon," said the muffled man.

"San Dominic! that Abdalla again, as I'm a Christian man," said Pedro, as he noticed the features of the new comer.

"Abdalla," uttered Charles, "what seek you of me?"

"The Moor's habiliments befit you well," said the Moslem, as he moved nearer to the knight.

"And what of that?"

"Oh, nothing, save that they have probably served you well, too."

"Perhaps they have. At all events, I am free from impertinent curiosity."

The knight spoke in a bitter tone, but Abdalla seemed not to notice it.

"You are not alone," he said.

"So far as secrets are concerned, myself and esquire are one," returned Charles, guessing the Moor's meaning.

"Then you have been to the dwelling of Ben Hamed?"

"Charles of Leon started, and instinctively his hand rested upon his sword-hilt.

"I mean you no harm," quickly added Abdalla, as he noticed the Christian's movement.

"Then why do you seek me? Why dog my steps in this way?"

"Because I have an interest in your movements. They may affect me much. You have been to Ben Hamed's."

"Let your assertion be true or false, what matters it?"

"Much to you, and perhaps much to me. Did you see the lady Zehra?"

"To tell ye the truth, Moor, I cannot but look upon your questions as impertinent. Why should I tell you what you ask?"

"Look ye, Charles of Leon, I know enough of your movements already to send you to the executioner—and let me tell you that our king is not very nice in his distinctions when anyone stands in his way. Don't grasp your sword in that fashion, for I can assure you there is no need of it. Now tell me—have you not determined to carry Zehra out of Granada?"

The Christian knight was astounded. If he had looked upon Abdalla before with curiosity, he now regarded him with a sort of fearful wonder.

"Who are you," he uttered, "that would even read my very thoughts?"

"I am nothing but what you see. I am poorer, perhaps, than you imagine, and there is but one man in Granada that dares even call me his friend. One

thing more I will tell you, and that is, if you have occasion to fear for your safety in the city, I am even with you there. Did you know your own 'vantage' you might at this moment place me where Mohammed would find a right speedy death for me. Ah, sir knight, you have nothing to fear from me. Now, tell me, have you not found in Zehra one whom you sought?"

Charles gazed upon the Moslem, but he did not speak.

"Answer me that," urged the Moor.

"And wherefore should I?"

"Because, if you did not know, I could tell you who and what she is."

"Is she of Moorish blood?"

"No."

"Was she born in Granada?"

"No."

"Then how came she here?"

"She was taken from her father's tent on the field of Almanza."

"And were you there?"

"Yes. That day the Moslem waded deep in his own blood; but the Christian trembled beneath the shock. Yes, I was there, Christian, and I had better have died there. But Allah rules as He pleases, and we must obey."

Even Pedro now began to look upon the Moor with other interest than that of doubt.

There was something frank and noble in his manner, and an air of misfortune surrounded him that was not to be mistaken.

Charles of Leon hesitated a few moments ere he spoke, but something told him that the Moor might be trusted.

"Since you know so much," he said, "I may tell you what you ask. I do mean to carry—"

"Sh!" whispered Pedro, pulling his master by the sleeve.

"Don't fear, Pedro," said Charles, gently removing his esquire's hand, and then turning to the Moor, he continued:

"I do mean to carry Zehra away from the power of the Granadan king."

"And do you think you will succeed?"

"I do not mean to fail."

"I am sorry for it," uttered the Moor. "The last hope I had is crushed."

"Ah!" pronounced Charles, in a prolonged tone.

"Will you betray me?"

"No, no," quickly returned Abdalla; "Allah knows I will not do that. But perhaps you may not succeed after all."

The last part of the Moor's remark was characterized by a sudden lighting up of strange hope.

"I shall certainly try," said the Christian, eyeing his interlocutor with increasing interest.

"Mark me, sir knight," the Moslem said, "I would that the king might drag the maiden to his palace. Start not, for I mean no evil to the fair lady. But let me assure you that Mohammed shall not harm her."

"What mean you by harm?" bitterly cried the young knight. "What greater harm could come to her than that? I tell you she would rather lie down quietly to her death than be the wife of Mohammed."

"You mistake me. She may go to the king's palace, and yet not be his wife. Tell me"—and Abdalla's voice sank to a strange whisper as he spoke—"do you not think she would have the courage to kill the king?"

Charles recoiled a step before the burning gaze of the Moor. He began to think him bereft of his senses.

"Think you not she would do it?" repeated Abdalla.

"No. I believe she would not."

"There's one there who would. The mother of the prince will not see another wife brought to supersede her. Emima has been faithful, and she will not brook the coming of a younger and more beautiful wife. I thank you that you have told me of your plans, for I was anxious to learn them; and though I can but hope you may not succeed as you have planned, yet I will pray for Zehra's welfare, and I swear to you that I will not betray you. Our meeting upon the roadside was an accident, but when you told me your name, and when I saw by your escutcheon who you were, I knew the business upon which you had come. Be careful how you conduct that business, for there may be obstacles you will not so easily surmount. This is not the strange meeting to which I alluded when last I saw you. That meeting may yet take place."

At this moment footsteps were heard approaching the spot, and Abdalla quickly recrossed the street, and glided away into the darkness of a narrow passage that led off towards the eastern part of the city.

The Christians drew their mantles more closely about them, as they noticed strangers coming towards them; but they passed on without stopping.

After Charles reached his hotel, Pedro tried to persuade him that he had done a very foolish thing, but the knight would not own it.

"He's a spy, I'm sure of it," said Pedro, with an unusual degree of perverseness.

"I think not," answered Charles.

"Then who or what is he?"

"I don't know any more than he told me to-night."

"And that wasn't a very clear account, by any means," said the esquire, in a decided tone.

"As clear as could be expected from one in his situation. He evidently has occasion to fear for his own safety."

"Now, don't be offended, Sir Charles, if I tell you just what I think."

"By no means, Pedro—you are privileged," returned Charles, with a smile.

"Then you are not so wise as you ought to be. Now, just look at your transactions with that Moor. You told him all he wanted to know, and what did you get from him in return? Nothing, only that he hoped you would not succeed? You betrayed your every secret to him—gave him full power over you, and in return you don't even know where to look for him. You don't know who he is, what his business is, or what his character is. You shouldn't have trusted him."

"What you say is all very well, Pedro, but your conclusions are not warrantable. To be sure, I learned but very little of this strange Moslem; but yet I feel sure that he is to be trusted. It is not my disposition to doubt every one I see."

"Let me tell you, my master, that I have a safe rule for that matter. When I am among friends I doubt not one till he proves himself treacherous; but when I am among enemies I doubt every one whom I do not know."

"Well, Pedro, your rule is a good one, I must admit; but I will be responsible for all evil results. It is late now."

Pedro took the hint, and without farther remark he turned towards his own room, which was only separated from his master's by a single door; but as he went his countenance showed plainly that he was not at all satisfied with what had transpired.

It cannot be said that the knight himself felt perfectly free from apprehension, and before he retired to his couch he had wished that he had not told to Abdalla all that he had so fully revealed. But it was too late to cherish regrets now.

CHAPTER X.

On the next morning Charles of Leon walked out towards the river Xenil, where he knew there were large pastures, for the purpose of seeking a horse. In the suburbs of the city he found plenty of horse-dealers, and ere long he was in full tide of barter. He found a horse that suited him exactly. The animal was an Arabian, delicately built, but yet strong and enduring of muscle. He was of a grayish colour, rather lighter than ordinary for such a colour, however; and having tried his speed, Charles determined to buy him. The price was exorbitant, but the knight was soon satisfied that the owner meant just what he said, so he drew forth his purse and counted out the sum.

Charles sprang upon the back of his new purchase, and as he rode back to the city he felt perfectly satisfied with his bargain. The animal was kind and easy to manage, and he betrayed no dislike to his change of master.

The horses were now ready; Charles had matured in his own mind the plans he was to follow, and the hours dragged slowly, heavily away while he waited for the moment that was to place Zehra in his possession.

It was a dark night—dark because it was moonless—but yet not dark enough to be gloomy, for there were stars peeping down upon the earth. Charles of Leon and his esquire rode out from the city to the northward, and at a suitable place, where grew a thick grove of oaks, they fastened their horses, Pedro having led the third horse by the bridle. The knight was dressed in his full armour of mail, and Pedro was likewise armed as if for battle.

After the horses were secured, Charles and his companion started off on foot, and having retraced their steps a distance of some fifty rods, they turned from the road and took the way towards a grove that lay at the foot of a gentle hill. Here they stopped to await the coming of Zehra, for it was here that she had agreed to meet her lover. It had been her own choice that he should not come to Ben Hamed's garden, for there was danger in such a course, and it could have been no aid to her.

While the knight was thus waiting, the gentle Zehra was preparing to meet him. A watch had been

set upon her movements, but she had contrived to outwit her guardian.

One of the Alcaldes's female slaves had been placed to overlook Zehra's motions, but the simple creature now lay as quiet as an infant beneath the effects of a strong sleeping-potion, and her young mistress had nothing to fear from her.

Such trinkets as the fair girl wished to retain she had secured, and the jewelled crucifix she had hung about her neck by the small golden chain that was attached to it.

A strong cord she had made of her useless garments, and by this she easily let herself down from her window into the garden below.

After she was safe upon the ground, she waited a single moment to assure her that no one was moving near her, and then drawing her mantle up over her head she glided swiftly away.

With rapid steps Zehra hastened on. The garden wall offered her no impediment, and she was soon flying along through the gloom far beyond Ben Hamed's grounds.

She thought not of the danger she was to meet, but she only thought of the misery she was leaving behind.

If she had a fear, it was that she might not find her lover at his post; but this was soon set at rest, for as she drew near the grove where she had promised to meet him, she heard her name pronounced by a voice she could not mistake.

"Zehra."

"It is Zehra," returned the fugitive, as she sank into the knight's arms.

"Heaven be praised! You are not weak, dear-est?"

"No, no—I am strong."

"Then let us hasten. Lead the way, Pedro, and have the horses ready."

As the knight spoke he drew the arm of Zehra within his own, and hastened on to the spot where the horses had been left.

"You do not regret this step?" he whispered, as he gained the road.

"No—I am happy."

"You shall always be so."

"And you shall make me so," said Zehra.

"Yes, fair girl—ever. Oh, there's joy for you in Leon. You shall find these friends you know not of. This heart of mine opened for you when first I saw you, but I knew not then how much I might love you—I knew not then how near, as well as dear, you were."

"Near?" repeated Zehra.

"Yes. There's no Moorish blood in your veins."

"Oh, I am sure there is not."

"Nor is the Moslem's Kingdom your home," said Charles.

"Do you know whence I came? Do you know where my birthplace was?"

"Yes. In Leon. Come—here are the horses."

"We must make all haste," said Pedro, as he led out the horse his master had bought for Zehra, "for in less than an hour the moon will be up."

"And that time shall place us far from here," returned Charles.

"Come, Zehra, let me assist you to your seat. The animal I have procured is kind, and if necessity calls he can be fleet of foot. There, sit firmly in your place now, and draw the rein without fear."

"I shall not fail," returned the fair girl, as she pressed her foot firmly into the stirrup. "The prize to be won will give me new strength."

"You, Pedro, will ride behind," said the knight, as he vaulted into his saddle; "and look well for the approach of danger. Let your ears be open. If we but keep the road, the horses will look out for the stumbling-blocks. Come, my faithful steed, bear me now from danger."

The noble horse seemed to comprehend his master's words, for he pricked up his ears and pawed eagerly upon the ground. Charles of Leon satisfied himself that Zehra was safely seated, and then he gave the signal for starting.

"Give your horse the reins," said Zehra, as soon as she found how easily she rode. "Fear not for me. I shall sit firmly."

The knight could not see the girl's features plainly, but he could tell by her voice that she was anxious, and he allowed his steed to go on as fast as he chose, while the fleet Arabian easily kept close at his side.

The road was good, and though the way was dark, yet the horses sped on without hindrance. In half an hour the Guadix had been crossed, and, as the bridge was cleared, Charles waited for Pedro to come up.

"Io, Pedro—will we take the way we came?" asked the knight.

There was a road that led directly on to the northward, but it will be remembered that when Charles came to Granada, he opened upon the river some distance farther to the eastward.

"This road will carry us on to Jaen, where we'd

better not go," answered Pedro, as he reined up his horse. "Let us take the old route. We can leave El Ajo to the right, and cross the Guadalquivir on the borders of Andalusia."

"Right, Pedro—right. We must reach the stronghold of St. Lorenzo in the morning, and there we shall be safe."

Again the horses were put forward, Pedro falling back into the rear. Charles followed the bank of the river down till he came to the road he sought, and here he turned off.

The distance of a mile through a thick wood opened into a wide, cultivated plain, and as they entered upon this the horses were urged somewhat.

"See," said Zehra, as she pointed to where the eastern heavens were growing red, "the moon is rising. We shall soon have a lighter path."

"And yet I should choose a dark one," returned the knight.

"Is not that another wood ahead?" the girl asked as she saw the dark line that bounded the plain to the northward.

"Yes, and it is the last we shall have to shelter us till we cross the Guadalquivir."

"I think there will be no danger," Zehra said, in a hopeful tone.

"Perhaps there may not be. Let your horse have his rein—keep firm in your seat—the way is smooth and clear."

Faster went the lover and his lady over the plain, and half the distance had been passed when the knight thought he heard a horse coming after him. He turned his head, and ere long Pedro came galloping furiously up.

"On! on!" cried Pedro, as he dashed alongside.

"There are horses in our rear!"

"Pursuers?" uttered Charles.

"Yes—they must be. I heard their horses' hoofs thundering upon the bridge, and they must have followed us on our route."

"Oh, then let us flee!" cried Zehra, in accents of terror. "I can ride upon the very wind without danger."

"Then on it is," shouted the knight, as he sank his spurs into his horse's flank.

The beast sprang forward, and Zehra's Arabian kept lightly up. The wood was gained, and its deep shade gave the riders an instinctive feeling of security.

Of one thing Charles soon became convinced, and that was, that his own horse was no match for the Arabian.

He knew that his faithful charger, though strong and powerful, was now going at the top of his speed, while it was evident at a single glance that Zehra's horse was scarcely straining a muscle.

The thought gave him a sudden uneasiness, for he knew that there were many of those lithe-limbed beasts in Granada, and it would be hard to distance them.

When the wood was cleared the open country beyond was bathed in the moonlight, and for a moment Charles of Leon hesitated.

"On! on!" shouted Pedro. "They have entered the wood."

The knight had thought of concealment, but the idea passed quickly away.

"They gain upon us," cried Pedro.

"We can gain the steep pass of El Ajo before they overtake us," returned the esquire.

"Heaven grant that we may!" uttered Charles.

"Fear not, Zehra, we are safe yet."

The maiden spoke not, but she grasped her rein with a firmer hold, and urged her horse on. She sat like a rock in her seat, with no fear save of those behind her.

"They have cleared the wood," cried Pedro.

Charles turned his head, and he could see the pursuers, and he could see their shields, too, as they glistened in the moonbeams.

"Can you count them?" he asked of Pedro.

"Yes—there are six of them; but I am sure there were more than six of them crossed the bridge, for I heard their horses' tramp, and there must have been a score, at least."

"Cheer up, sweet Zehra," said the young Christian, as he noticed that she trembled. "Six of the Moors are nothing to me if I can but reach the El Ajo pass. There I would face a score of them."

The pass to which allusion was made was some eight miles distant, and with the hopes of reaching it the knight urged his horse to the top of his speed. Pedro now kept closely behind, and ever and anon he cast his eyes back to see how came on the pursuers.

The moon had risen clear and bright, and her round, full face threw down a flood of light upon the plain—a light so glaring that Charles almost fancied the sun had grown crazy, and rushed untimely to his rising.

He could see that Zehra looked anxious—that her face was pale, and as he looked upon her he felt his



[THE EL AJO PASS.]

muscles grow stronger and his heart grow bigger with love and daring.

Before two-thirds of the distance to the pass had been gained, the tramp of the pursuing horses could be heard. They sounded fearfully distinct, and Charles could hear how quick they were.

"They are upon us!" uttered Zehra. "Oh! heaven save us!"

"There's hope yet, dearest," cried Charles, assuming a cheerful tone, "if we can but hold out a few minutes longer. I can see the rocky crags now. On, Zehra! Oh, there's hope yet."

"Heaven defend me!"

"Heaven will aid me, and I will defend you. Fear not while this arm holds its strength."

"And if that arm should fail! Oh, that would be more dreadful still."

Zehra spoke again, but the clatter of the horses' hoofs drowned her voice.

"On! on! One push more!" shouted Pedro.

That was given, and the reeking horses entered the pass.

It was a narrow defile, not over six feet wide, flanked on either side by high and almost perpendicular cliffs, and some hundred feet long. It was a natural notch through a spur of the Alpujarras, and a passage other than through this could not be made except by going six miles farther to the westward. The moment that Charles cleared the pass he reined up his horse and stopped.

"Pedro," he said, "push on with Zehra."

"And you, Sir Charles," uttered the esquire, as he pulled in his horse.

"I will stop and cut off the pursuit. Go now."

"But I must remain by your side."

"No, no. In heaven's name I order you to push on. I can hold them all at bay till you have escaped. On! on! Keep the road to St. Lorenzo, and I will overtake you. Not another word. Go now. Fear not for me, Zehra. My love for you shall keep me whole. Go with my man, and I will see you again."

"But this is—"

"On, Pedro, and obey me!" shouted the knight, in a tone that was not to be disobeyed. "They are already upon us. In heaven's name, on! If I fall, you will know what to do; but I will not fall. Sink your rowels deeply in."

It was with a dubious look that Pedro obeyed; but he knew there was no time for farther reply, and he set off.

"Heaven bless you!" uttered Charles, as he pressed the hand of Zehra to his lips. "There—now follow my esquire."

As the maiden's horse dashed off, the pursuers were almost up to the pass.

The knight loosened his shield from its rest, and then drawing his trusty sword, he started back again into the narrow notch.

On came the Moors, but only two could ride abreast, and even at that they were rather pinched for room.

"Out of the way," cried a voice, which Charles at once recognized as the Alcalde's. "Back, or I'll ride you down."

"You'll ride down a dead man, then," returned the knight.

"Charles of Leon, by Allah!" exclaimed Ben Hamed. "This for thy carcass, Christian dog!"

Charles slightly backed as the Alcalde came furiously on, and the latter received the worst of the shock. The Christian caught the blow of the sword that was aimed at him upon his shield, while his own had only been thrust straight forward, so that Ben Hamed received its point in his side without seeing it.

The shock, the glancing of his own weapon from the Christian's shield, and the deep wound in the side, were sufficient to throw the Alcalde upon the ground, while Charles allowed the riderless horse to dash on by him.

Pedro had miscounted the pursuers, for Ben Hamed had but four followers; but it made but little difference, for only two could come forward at a time, and even then at a disadvantage.

At the present moment the Moors were puzzled, for their leader lay directly in their way. Ben Hamed soon gained his feet, but it was only to be knocked down by the horse of one of his own men.

He fell upon one side of the pass, however, and the foremost Moor pushed by him. It was not very light in the notch, but yet things could be distinctly seen in the outline, and the Christian was prepared for the onset.

He met the coming Moor, and at the fourth pass his sword found the Moslem's bosom.

Two of the Moors had dismounted and were dragging their leader out from the pass, while the remaining one saw his companion fall, and then sprang forward to avenge him.

Thus did Charles of Leon take his enemies one at a time, and those who knew him would not have wondered that he conquered.

His present opponent engaged him in a smart fight, but Charles's good sword failed him not, and ere long the second Moslem lay dead upon the cold, rocky path.

The most severe trial was yet to come; for no sooner had the two Moors seen Ben Hamed safe at the

other end of the pass, than they sprang back into their saddles and made at the Christian.

"Give way, dog!" cried one of them.

"Not while I live," returned Charles.

Charles of Leon received both of their blows without harm—one upon his shield, and the other upon his mailed shoulder.

The Christian had one advantage; his triple mail shielded him against all slashing, cutting blows, while his opponents wore only single breastplates. The clang of swords was sharp and fierce; once the Christian got a prick in the right thigh, but the man who gave him the thrust fell lifeless from his horse the next moment.

The remaining Moor soon cried for quarter, and Charles let his point fall.

"Back, then," the Christian cried. "Let fall your sword!"

The Moslem dropped his weapon and backed quickly from the pass.

"Help me to my horse," faintly groaned Ben Hamed, who had raised himself upon his elbow.

"Help the poor Alcalde," said Charles.

"Christian dog!" exclaimed the fallen Moslem, "you have not yet escaped. Vengeance shall yet be mine."

"Rail on, poor fool—then go and find another wife for your king."

The Alcalde was lifted to the back of one of the horses, and with much difficulty he managed to grasp the reins.

"Don't be too confident," he uttered, at the same times cringing with pain. "You may yet wonder to find who is the fool!"

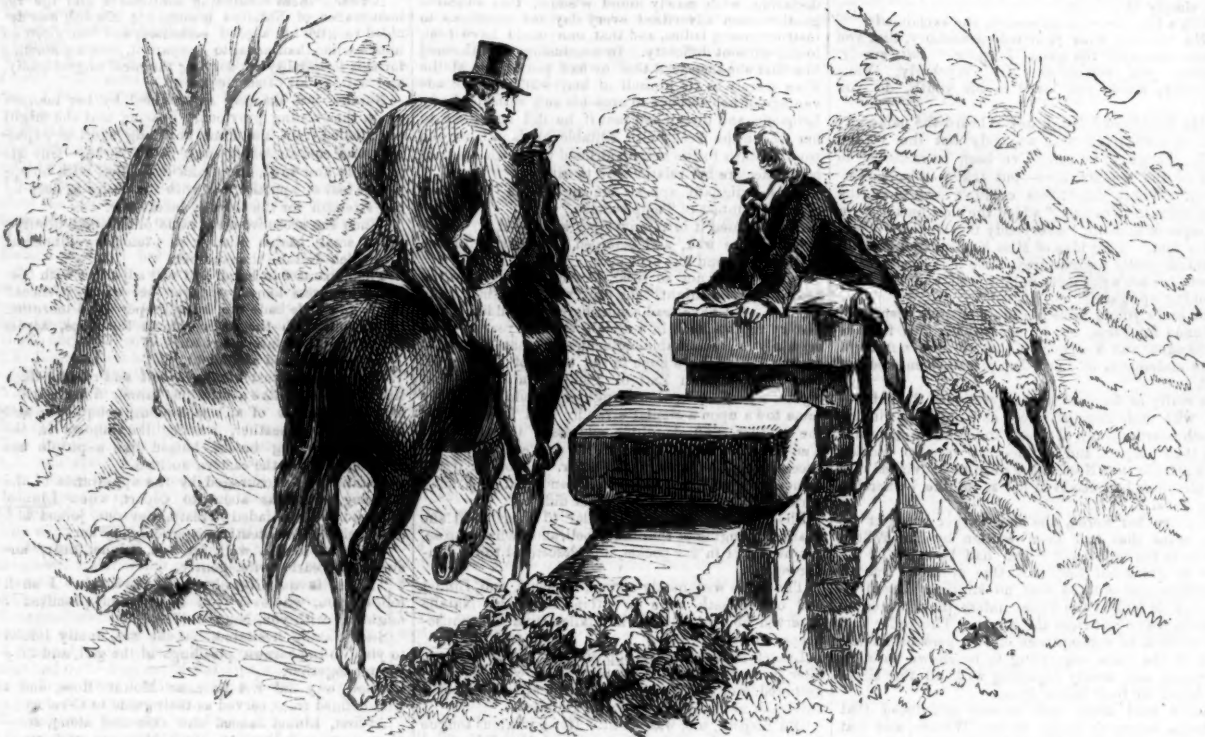
As the Alcalde spoke he made a motion to his companion, who had remounted his horse, and they both started off.

Charles of Leon turned back and instinctively he stopped to gaze upon those whom he had slain. He could just see the glinting of their breastplates, and he guided his horse carefully over the bodies.

"Does Ben Hamed speak with reason?" he uttered to himself, as he thrust his sword back into its scabbard. "I shall wonder to find who is the fool! By heavens! if there be danger ahead!"

The knight's exclamation was cut short by the clatter of horses' hoofs. He quickly drew his sword again, and with much misgiving he set himself on his guard. It was a single horseman, coming from the northward, and as the clatter grew more distinct a variety of fears intruded themselves upon the knight's mind.

(To be continued.)



[LORD WALDENHURST AND ARTHUR.]

THE HOUSE OF SECRETS.

By LEON LEWIS.

CHAPTER XXXI.

No thought within her bosom stirs;
But wakes one feeling dark and dread;
God keep thee from a doom like hers,
Of living when the hopes are dead.

Phoebe Carey.

I feel
Of this dull sickness at my heart afraid!
And in my eyes the death-sparks flash and fade;
And something seems to rise!
Over my bosom like a frozen hand.

Willis.

RETURNING to the Pens from her visit to Mount Rose, Natalie shut herself up in her parlour, threw herself upon the lounge by the window, and engaged in the perusal of the letters she had so providentially discovered. She concluded that they were but unimportant missives, since the late Earl of Templecombe had gathered so many into his collection at Wycherly Castle, and it was not probable that he would have omitted from it any that were important.

What, then, was the surprise of the unacknowledged daughter to find in the little packet a letter of great import.

The letter in question, hidden among several unsigned notes, was worn and creased, as if it had been carried a long time in the bosom of its recipient as a priceless treasure that could not be too closely guarded. It was addressed to Amy, under cover to her maid, and was signed simply "Leopold."

It was a loving epistle, chiding Amy for the indulgence of "weak fears" as to her future, and that of their child, and reminding her that she was an honoured wife, whose first duty was that of obedience to her husband's will.

Then followed an allusion to a certificate of marriage, which the writer declared to be safely put away beyond fear of discovery by his friends, yet where it could be readily produced at the right moment. He stated that he should already have acknowledged her, but for the birth of their little Natalie, whose appearance would indicate to the world the brief period in which he had mourned for the mother of the little Lady Leopold, and he was not yet quite prepared to face the indignation of the world, and to hear the comments of his friends.

"There was, then, a marriage!" murmured Natalie. "My father was not so unworthy as I thought him, and has a right to my affection as well as that of my sister. My poor mother was not the weak girl I have sometimes fancied her, and I have no need to blush

for my parentage. The certificate of marriage is doubtless long since destroyed, but this letter will at least serve to establish my position in the eyes of the Lady Leopold, and will give me my own self-respect. What will Vane say when he learns that I am his cousin, the daughter of his uncle, the late Lord Templecombe?"

She joyfully mused over her prospects for the future, but finally roused herself, put the important letter in her bosom, and the others in her pocket, and prepared to atone for her day's leisure by an hour of study.

Turning to her table, she noticed that it was covered with a quantity of old books she had never before seen, and which must have been placed there by old Elspeth during her absence on the moor.

Looking them over idly, she saw that upon the fly-leaf of each volume was inscribed the name of Sir Wilton Werner, or rather the name without the title. It struck her as a singular coincidence that books belonging to a former master of the old housekeeper should be found in a house belonging to Lord Templecombe, particularly as some of the books were of great value.

She concluded that they had been given to old Elspeth by her former employer, and amused herself by looking them over. There were story books, adventures, travels, &c., and a beautifully illuminated volume with the genealogical trees of the Werners and the Wiltons, and with biographical notices of both families.

"How could they have given that book to their housekeeper?" queried Natalie. "I should have thought the owner would have prized it highly. I think I'll take it down to old Elspeth, and ask her how it came into her possession."

Taking it in her hands, she quitted the parlour, descended the stairs, and made her way to the housekeeper's room, where its proprietress sat by the window, engaged in knitting.

The door looking upon the garden was open, and Linnet sat upon the threshold, looking with rapt gaze at the glorious summer sky.

"Come in, Nata-lee!" she said, turning her head slightly as she heard the soft rustle of her muslin robe.

Old Elspeth arose, and placed a chair for her young mistress, expressing garrulously her pleasure at seeing her lady in her room, and inquiring if she had had a pleasant ramble over the moor.

"Shall I hasten the dinner, my lady?" she asked. "You must be hungry, and I don't wonder at it."

Natalie shook her head, and glanced at the clock, signifying that she preferred to wait until her usual

early dinner-hour; and then pointed at the housekeeper's chair, indicating her wish that the old woman should resume her seat.

Despairing of making the deaf housekeeper understand what she wished to say, unless she introduced the subject first to the eyes of old Elspeth, Natalie held out the illuminated volume into full view, and inquired in her loudest tones how it came into her possession.

"Yes, I put the book on your table, along of a lot of other ones, while you was gone," declared the housekeeper, in a pleased tone. "I says to myself, says I, 'My lady'll think the world of that genealogy book. It'll tell her jest who her husband is, and who he sprung from, and all about him.' 'Tain't every family as has such a record, and I make no doubt but that your ladyship is prouder of Sir Wilton since you've seen it."

"But Sir Wilton Werner is not my husband," said the young wife, in her gentlest manner, but in rather harsh tones. "I am the wife of your present master, the Earl of Templecombe."

"The Earl of Brambleby," ejaculated the housekeeper, quite puzzled, not having comprehended Natalie's words. "Who in the world is the Earl of Brambleby, begging your pardon, my lady? I don't know no earl, nor no higher gentleman than the present baronet, that I hadn't seen for years till the other day."

"Poor thing! She remembers only her long-past youth," murmured Natalie. "She has quite forgotten her years of faithful service to the Templecombes, and has even forgotten their names. She thinks that she still serves Sir Wilton Werner."

"Sir Wilton Werner, Nata-lee," said the sweet voice of Linnet, and the girl turned her gaze from the lovely face of her young mistress. "Granny always talks of Sir Wilton Werner. He's coming here some day—the agent said so."

Natalie pondered a moment, and then resolved to make the effort to recall to the old housekeeper's mind her supposed faithful services to the Templecombe family.

In a very loud and clear tone, therefore, as she remembered having heard that a distinct utterance was needful in conversing with the deaf, Natalie exclaimed:

"Have you, then, quite forgotten the Templecombes, Elspeth?"

"Bramblebys? Why, I never knew 'em."

Natalie was about to utter her surprise, and to repeat her inquiry, when she suddenly reflected that the old woman could never have served the Temple-

combes, since the present earl sprang from the younger branch of the family, and that his father's name had been simply Wycherly.

With a brightened countenance, she exclaimed:

"No wonder, with your failing memory, that you did not remember the name I spoke. But, surely, Elspeth, you remember Mr. Wycherly, Vane Wycherly, whom you loved in your youth, do you not?"

"Mr. Lightfoot? No, I never heard the name, my lady. I never lived with anybody but the Wilton family, though, to be sure, I've been housekeeper to some of the tenants here—but that was only temporary. Those Lightfoots couldn't have hired the Fens, though, to be sure," added the old woman, with a glimpse of humour, "everybody that did hire it was light o' foot. That idea of Miss Kate's about acids in the marsh pretty nigh destroyed the old place. Think heaven, her son's got more enlightened, and the Fens is looking up again."

The earl's young bride began to suspect Elspeth of weakened intellects, but a glance at her face forbade the thought, and a suspicion that all was not right in the statements of Lord Templecombe entered her mind.

To verify or disprove it, she questioned the old woman with unfeeling patience and untiring lungs. Elspeth heard enough of these inquiries to comprehend their purport, and her answers were so decided and emphatic that Natalie began to be convinced that Templecombe had deceived her as to the ownership of the Fens.

To prove her words, the housekeeper brought up some notes that had been written by Sir Wilton Werner to the agent, and which had been left by the latter to guide old Elspeth. One of these was of recent date, and ordered that no stranger should be admitted to look at the Fens, unless they presented orders to that effect from the agent. This order had been written in consequence of two persons having called at the Fens, requesting to be shown through the rooms, and finally departing with all the silver they could lay their hands upon.

Natalie read them, and became convinced that the house belonged to Sir Wilton Werner, and that her husband had either hired or borrowed it for her occupancy.

The housekeeper had been staring blankly at her for some time, and now ejaculated:

"Then, you are not Lady Werner?"

Natalie shook her head, and wrote with her pencil upon the back of the letter, a declaration that she was the wife of Lord Templecombe, who had probably hired the place of its owner.

"How am I to know that your husband is a lord?" grumbled the housekeeper. "He let me call him Sir Wilton. Oh, dear, I wish the agent knew of this. I've been nervous ever since I lost them spoons and forks. And your husband didn't bring an order from the agent, nor a line from Sir Wilton. I'm afraid I've got myself into trouble. I wish the agent was here."

Old Elspeth rocked herself to and fro in her distress, and Natalie, covered with confusion, knew not what to say.

"Nata-lee," said Linnet, breaking the silence, "Granny is daft. She doesn't know what the pretty flowers say to me. Linnet will bring you some of the dearest ones, and they will comfort you. If you don't have the flowers to talk to, Linnet is afraid you will melt away, and be gone as you were before."

With these words, the girl danced across the garden and upon the moor in quest of flowers.

And Natalie returned to her own rooms.

The peculiarity of her position struck her with painful force. It was not a pleasant thing to be an inmate of a house without authority to remain; and to be tended by a servant who regarded her as an impostor and intruder, who might be turned away.

Natalie's first impulse was to give way to tears.

Her second, to drive them away, and calmly face the exigencies of her situation.

She was tempted to leave the Fens without delay, and return to the hidden cottage and the neighbourhood of her friends at Wycherly Castle, but she resisted the temptation, feeling a conviction that such a course would only exasperate her husband, and perhaps utterly alienate him from her.

She decided that since he had brought her to the Fens, it was best for her to remain there for the present. It was probable that he had hired the place for her use, and that he had quite forgotten to bring a letter from the owner to the woman in charge.

But why had he declared himself the possessor of the Fens?

After a little meditation, the young wife seated herself at her desk, and wrote to her husband.

She addressed to him a grave and stern remonstrance for having deceived her and placed her in a false position towards old Elspeth, from whom she had

learned the name of the true proprietor of the place. She upbraided him for not having sent her a governess, declaring, with newly found wisdom, that educated gentlewomen advertised every day for situations to instruct young ladies, and that one could have been found without difficulty. In conclusion, she informed him that she suspected that he had placed her at the Fens merely to rid himself of her, while he took advantage of her absence to urge his suit with the Lady Leopold, and threatened that if he did not come to her within the week, with suitable explanations, she would return to the neighbourhood of the Castle, and boldly declare her relationship to him.

This indignant appeal she signed as "Natalie, rightful Countess of Templecombe."

She enclosed it in an envelope, addressed it, sealed it with white wax, and stamped the letter with the seal her husband had sent her.

"If I were not so tired, I would take it to the nearest town to-night," she said, when she had quite finished. "I have read somewhere," she added, "that history repeats itself in a certain term of years. It is certainly a remarkable coincidence that my poor mother should have gone to the town of Carefort to post a letter to an Earl of Templecombe, and that eighteen years later her daughter should go to the same town upon a similar errand. And in each case the mother and daughter addressed the Lord of Templecombe as her husband, the one earl being the successor and nephew of the other. I wonder if the coincidence will hold good to the end, and if I shall perish in my youth as my mother did."

She indulged thoughts similar to these until she heard the ringing of the dinner-bell, and then she arose, put her letter in her pocket, and descended to the dining-room.

The table was neatly spread, as usual, and Linnet and old Elspeth were in attendance, but Natalie observed how greatly she had fallen from the housekeeper's favour.

Linnet took her seat opposite her young mistress, after presenting her the bunch of flowers she had gathered, and prattled away with the artlessness of a child, not noticing the silence of Natalie.

Old Elspeth, too, was silent. Her garrulous tongue for once was hushed. She removed the dishes and replaced them with others, with a dumbness equal to her deafness, and watched the silver with an anxiety that under other circumstances would have roused the merriment of poor Natalie, but which now only caused her heart to ache with a dull heaviness.

The deserted wife ate little, trifling with her food nervously, and waiting to hear the housekeeper speak. She was rather timid, and began to fear that she should not be allowed to remain at the Fens until her husband's arrival. A choking in her throat prevented her putting the question plainly, even if her timidity had allowed her to do so.

When the repast was concluded the housekeeper did not request her, as usual, to give her orders for supper, but removed the silver expeditiously, and then returned to perform the like office with the dishes.

Natalie did not regard the hint to withdraw, but took out her pencil and some paper, with which she had provided herself, and wrote in large characters a statement that she had written to Lord Templecombe, who would hasten to her before the expiration of a week, adding that she should post the letter on the morrow.

The old woman read the words carefully, bowed coldly, and put away the note to show to the agent when she would endeavour to justify herself to him for having admitted strangers to the Fens without authority, under the impression that she was welcoming her master home.

The young wife shut herself up during the remainder of the day, making her appearance only at supper, and requesting Linnet to bring up her tea.

She retired early to gather strength for the long walk of the morrow, but the sorrow that weighed so heavily upon her kept her wakeful and restless, and hours passed before she slumbered.

She awakened before sunrise, dressed herself suitably for her walk, and would have stolen out from the house breakfastless, but that Linnet came up and informed her that breakfast was ready.

Tying on her hat and buttoning her jacket, the unacknowledged wife descended to the dining-room, where a breakfast of steaming coffee, hot rolls, broiled fowls, honey, and preserved fruits, awaited her.

She took her place at the table, as did Linnet, and was served in silence.

The housekeeper was not bad-hearted, and had not her hospitality lately been rewarded with gross ingratitude, as recorded, and had she not received orders to admit no strangers to the Fens upon any consideration without a written order, she would have regarded Natalie very differently.

As it was, the facts that Natalie's protector had passed himself off as Sir Wilton Werner, and that he had brought no credentials whatever, militated strongly against Natalie herself. But as the young wife had

acknowledged that she was not Lady Werner, the old woman felt some pity for her.

Between these conflicting sentiments and the remembrance of Natalie's beauty, old Elspeth had decided to give her a good breakfast, and had risen an hour earlier than usual to prepare it, making amends for this hospitality by serving the meal ungraciously, and with an air of suspicion.

Natalie was scarcely so troubled by her manner as on the evening previous. Fearing that she might be expelled from the Fens, anything short of expulsion was comparatively easy to be borne. She ate her rolls and fowl, and drank her coffee with no apparent loss of appetite, but with the desire to keep up her strength for the journey before her.

When she arose from the table old Elspeth brought her a small basket filled with a tempting luncheon, for which Natalie thanked her.

Then, parasol in hand, and veil adjusted, with her soft gray dress looped up over her white petticoat, the young wife bade the housekeeper good-morning, passed out upon the portico, down the steps, across the garden, and into the road.

Here she paused a moment.

The sun was just rising, a soft and roseate flush tinged the sky, like a crimson banner flung out before the advance of an approaching conqueror; and the mist, its heather, waving like billows in the pleasant morning breeze, looked like a purple sea rippling against the eastern horizon.

Natalie was encouraged by the appearance of the morning, and was about to depart, when Linnet, crowned with a faded wreath, ran out, joined her, and declared her intention to accompany her.

"It is too long a walk for you, Linnet, dear," answered the earl's wife, gently.

"No, it is not, Nata-lee, and I will go. I shall follow you, whatever you say. You promised I might go with you, Nata-lee!"

Still, Natalie hesitated, but she was finally forced to yield to the earnest pleadings of the girl, and they set out together.

Their way did not lie near Mount Rose, and a well-defined track served as their guide to Carefort.

At first, Linnet danced and skinned along, stopping now and then to pluck blossoms and green sprigs for a new wreath she was weaving, and carolled wildly to the birds, but her friend's gravity at length made itself felt upon her, and she walked along quietly, with a piteous look of apprehension upon her face, fearing that she was to be robbed of Natalie.

The deserted wife walked on steadily, absorbed in her own thoughts, and scarcely conscious of the unwonted mood of the girl, but she was at length aroused by Linnet, who said, with a quivering lip and piteous tone:

"Nata-lee, what has Linnet done? You don't smile or look pleased, and your eyes looked at me as the eyes of strange birds do—as if you didn't know me. I'm afraid you don't love Linnet any more!"

"Yes, I do, dear!" responded Natalie, kindly. "I have been troubled, but I will talk with you. What did the birds tell you this morning?"

Linnet brightened up at this evidence of interest, and prattled on until she had recovered her usual spirits. And then she sang, and danced, and skipped along, like a bird, trilling out her joy in melodious notes that awakened a hundred echoes from the feathered throats around her.

The sun came up with genial warmth, and the heat would soon have become distressing, but for the soft breeze that swept over the moor, bringing with it a delicious and fragrant coolness.

When they began to weary they sat down among the flowers, and partook of their lunch under the shade of their parasols, arising refreshed and strengthened to continue their journey.

With their frequent pauses to rest, and the slow pace at which they performed the latter half of the journey, it was noon when they walked wearily into the High Street of Carefort.

The two girls, one gifted with the beauty of intelligence, and the other with the unconscious grace of a fawn, attracted considerable attention among the good people of the town. Natalie, in her gray costume, presented a very lady-like appearance, contrasting strongly with the singular dress and flower-crowned head of her humbler companion.

It was market-day, and the High Street was thronged with wagons. Men hustled to and fro, stopping to glance at the girls as they passed, women looked out from the shop-windows and doors, and stared at the two beings, so unlike themselves, as if they belonged to a different race.

At length, Natalie came upon a small building with a sign, on which was painted the words "Post-office," and with a sigh of relief she entered it, followed by Linnet.

She waited until two or three rosy-cheeked damsels, with many blushes and some appearance of mys-

tery, had either inquired for or posted letters, from or to whom their blushes pretty well indicated, and then she posted her own, and retired from the office.

The Crown Inn was across the way, and Natalie conducted Linnet thither, and found her way up into the waiting-room.

"We cannot walk home, Linnet," she said, ringing the bell. "We must get someone to drive us to the Fens. I feel quite worn out, although accustomed to walking."

A servant appeared at this moment, and the earl's young wife ordered coffee, and requested that a vehicle should be got ready for their immediate use.

The coffee was brought, and the servant, coming to remove the dishes a few minutes later, announced that a fly was in waiting to convey the ladies whither they wished.

Natalie defrayed her small bill, and went down to the court-yard, where the fly was waiting. She stated her destination to the inn-keeper, paid the amount required for the transit, and entered the fly with Linnet, who was at first considerably frightened at the to her novel conveyance.

The journey back to the Fens was performed in very good time, and Natalie dismissed the fly at the gate, and went up to the house with many misgivings whether she would be allowed to enter.

But no one appeared to obstruct her progress.

The front door stood slightly ajar, as they had left it, and she ascended to her own rooms, while Linnet danced into her grandmother's room, to relate to her unheeding ears by what a singular and pleasant mode she had returned home.

The wind changed during the afternoon, blowing over the marsh, and bringing with it a miasmatic atmosphere, under which poor Natalie laboured hard for breath, and her head throbbled with a fierce pain.

Already her residence at the Fens had changed her.

Constitutionally delicate, and accustomed to the pure, sweet air abounding at Afton Grange, poor Natalie had drooped under this sickly fever-breath, and the colour had quite died out of her lips and cheeks, except at times when her face wore a hectic glow that was worse than the paleness.

It would not take six months of this plague-laden air to consume her vitality and relieve Lord Templecombe for ever of her importunities.

Closing her windows and doors, excepting those opening upon the moor, in order to shut out the malaria, Natalie caught sight of her reflection in the mirror.

Fale, wan, and shadowy, could that image be the exact representation of herself?

What had robbed her of her bloom and healthfulness?

She sat down and asked herself these questions. She noticed that it was difficult for her to command her thoughts, that her mind would not be fixed upon the cause of her alarm, and that a vacant, dreamy sensation was creeping over her, a kind of mental lethargy, from which it was difficult to arouse herself.

Alarmed at this, as much as at the change in her personal appearance, she sprang up with something of the desperate energy with which a freezing man, conscious of his danger, strives to ward off his sleepiness, and walked to and fro, extending her arms backwards and forwards to awaken herself the more thoroughly.

For she felt a sort of numbness oppressing her, and her instinct taught her to fight against it with all her remaining strength.

Finding it difficult to arouse herself, she was about to yield to the sensation with the resignation of a fatalist, when she remembered the bottle of wine she had retained from the basket sent by the earl.

This bottle, with a glass, had been placed in the cheffonier at one side of the parlour. The cork had been drawn by the earl's valet.

Pouring out a glassful of this wine, Natalie drank it. It had the desired effect.

She began immediately to feel renewed strength, as if fresh life had been infused into her veins; her brain cleared, and she regained command of her lately wandering thoughts.

And she sat down, proceeding to review her late sensations, and trying to discover the cause of her strange malady.

She recalled a casual remark of old Elspeth, to the effect that a great many of the tenants had died of fever at the Fens, and that an insidious and deadly fever had stricken down the majority of the Wiltons in their youth, and that those who had lived to middle age had suffered from weakened and debilitated constitutions.

A puff of pestilential air that found its way into the room, despite her precautions, gave her the solution to the mystery.

"I see," she murmured, mournfully, the hectic flush giving way to a deadlier paleness than that caused by the air. "Elmer has brought me here that I may perish as so many have done before me! I can scarcely doubt that such was his wish and intention. I am

almost determined to leave this place to-morrow and confront him, declaring his baseness! And yet I may wrong him. I will wait a week longer, as I promised in my letter, and then if he do not come to me, I will go to him!"

With this resolution, she lay back upon her couch and gave way to the feeling of unconquerable drowsiness creeping over her.

CHAPTER XXXII

This too much lenity,
And harmful pity, must be laid aside.

Shakespeare.

Now that young Arthur was domiciled in the home of Richard Layne, acknowledged as the nephew of the latter, and watched over and cared for by kind persons, Miss Wycherly strove to banish all apprehensions on his account, and to find a silver lining to the dark clouds enveloping her fate. But her anxious moments had not vanished.

Whenever she returned to her own apartments she came with quickened step, half expecting to hear a gleeful, childish welcome; and this momentary expectation was followed by a chill of despair. She missed in the night-time the clasp of small, clinging hands, the pressure of a little head upon her bosom, a precious burden within her arms—joys that had been prized by her above all earthly things, for she had known so little of them until recently.

She endeavoured to console herself with the thought that her boy was happy without her, but often she started up from her sleep, fancying that she heard him sobbing, or calling upon her name. She knew that no one but herself could bestow upon him that tender mother-love which overflowed her own heart for him; and she wept oftentimes tears of anguish that her brave, high-spirited boy should have to confine his boyish troubles to his own breast, and learn thus early in life that he stood alone.

Her only comfort was that he was safe.

After the betrothal of Lady Ellen Haigh to Richard Layne the unhappy young mother considered even more the future of Arthur. She reflected that the union of the young couple might be blessed with children, and that her boy would then, by contrast, feel his isolation more keenly.

And so she gradually came to the resolve of going away with him. She planned that when the Castle guests should have departed, she would hasten the marriage of Lady Leopold to Basil Montmaur, and then, with her boy, proceed quietly to some small Continental town, where she would incur no risks of meeting her friends or acquaintances, and where she might spend her years in peace.

She looked out upon a map for a German town, out of the usual course of English tourists, and decided that that should be her future home.

Unwilling to lose a single day in the furthering of her schemes, she wrote immediately to the manager of her property, directing certain Consols to be sold, rents collected, &c., as she wished to be ready to leave at a moment's notice.

It only remained to await quietly the departure of her guests and the marriage of Leopold.

Her preparations fully made, Alethea confided her plans to Richard Layne, who sought at first to dissuade her from them, but who finally acquiesced in her decision, feeling that she would be happier and more at ease in the life upon which she sought to enter.

He could not conceal from her that Arthur grieved for her and spoke of her continually when alone with him, the boy having an impression that his beautiful young mother was in need of his protection and assistance.

He did not deny, too, that Arthur suffered from loneliness, and that a score of times each day he begged to be taken to his mother, or back to the hidden cottage and his playmates there.

Having come to a final decision, Alethea became more at ease, and unbent to her guests. She even exhibited tenderness towards the Lady Leopold, who felt a quickened affection for her, and who daily prayed that her beautiful aunt might be happy—for Leopold imagined that Miss Wycherly grieved because Richard Layne had transferred his attentions to the Lady Ellen Haigh.

In proportion as Alethea became gayer, Lord Waldemere grew more gloomy and moody.

He indulged more frequently than ever in wild rides across the country upon his half-tamed steed, and, when at the Castle, he watched his hostess furtively, as though he expected her features to reveal the cause of her evident relief.

He imagined that she had accepted Sir Wilton Werner, but, in truth, the baronet had not yet ventured to solicit the promised answer to his suit, and Miss Wycherly had quite forgotten the scene in the conservatory, beyond a thrill of pleasure that the Marquis of Waldemere should have been an observer

of it. She had forgotten her promise to consider the baronet's offer, and her suit was too wary to obtrude himself yet upon her remembrance, and so risk a dismissal.

In one of his solitary morning rides, at an hour when Richard Layne was visiting at the Castle, Lord Waldemere rode slowly by the home of Layne. His horse was foaming with his late furious pace, and his lordship himself felt quite worn out.

He was weary, mentally as well as physically, and his proud dark eyes beamed with a mournful look, and a sad expression rested upon his face.

He had been wishing with passionate earnestness that he could have died in his youth, before his bosom had become the seething volcano it now was, and before life had become the utterly worthless thing it now seemed to him.

"I could destroy my own life," he muttered, gloomily, "but that the act would be so cowardly. I suppose I can bear the worst that fate may have in store for me. But, oh, how gladly I would welcome the messenger Death!"

He was thinking thus when he heard a childish voice calling him to stop.

He started, looked in every direction, and at length his gaze rested upon a sunny little head, thrust through an aperture in the open-work iron gate at the foot of the lawn of Layne's dwelling.

He recognized instantly little Arthur!

His lordship was tempted to put spurs to his steed, the sight of the child arousing so many bitter feelings in his heart, but the boy called loudly to him:

"Please stop! I want to tell you something. Oh, won't you stop?"

The pleading tone could not be resisted. He did stop in his course, riding up close to the gate, and demanding what was wanted.

"I've been wanting to see you," answered the little fellow, fearlessly. "I've seen you a good many times when you didn't seeme. Do you see my mamma every day?"

The marquis bowed assent.

"Is she happy without me?" asked Arthur, with quivering lips, awaiting breathlessly an answer to his all-important question.

"No, she is not!" replied the marquis, with a momentary pleasure at the thought of her probable anxiety.

"Won't you take me to her? I want her and she wants me. Won't you take me on your horse to my mamma?"

Lord Waldemere shook his head.

"Your mamma doesn't like me," he said. "She would not want me to bring you home. She put you here to hide you from me!"

"Are you her enemy?" asked Arthur, his tone trembling with fears for his mother. "You wouldn't hurt her, would you?"

"I would not hurt one hair of her head, boy; but," added the marquis, in a lower tone, "I would wring her heart until nothing farther could move it."

"I don't understand you," said Arthur, wistfully. "I didn't hear all you said. My mamma is afraid of you, but I am not. I don't believe you would hurt anyone unless they hurt you first. Now, would you?"

"No, I would not!" was the energetic response.

"I knew it!" cried the boy. "I'll tell mamma so. She never hurt anybody, so she won't be afraid of you any more. I want to see her to find out if she is my mamma now. Papa Richard says he is Uncle Richard, and I have to call him so. I suppose I haven't got any papa of my own!"

The little fellow spoke with such a grieved look that the marquis's heart was touched.

He looked down upon his face with keener interest, noting how very like he was to his young mother. He had the same proud features, but his mouth was more warm and spirited, and his eyes were darker than hers.

He was a beautiful boy, with the innocence of babyhood, and the fearlessness of one who has never had cause to fear.

Looking at him, a keen pang shot through Lord Waldemere's heart, and he asked himself why such a noble child as this should be nameless and fatherless when he would have been so proud of him as the heir of his ancient name.

"It is one of those mysteries that never will be solved in this world!" he thought.

Emboldened by the softening expression on his lordship's face, Arthur withdrew his head from the aperture and climbed the gate with the celerity of a squirrel, seating himself upon the top of the post, thus bringing his face on a level with that of the horseman.

"I love you," he then said, confidentially.

His lordship's eyes filled with sudden tears, and his mouth trembled with emotion.

"Why do you love me, little innocent?" he asked.

"I don't know; but I do love you, sir," answered Arthur. "You wouldn't hurt anybody, would you—anybody that never hurt you?"

The marquis shook his head in silence. "I thought so," cried the child, triumphantly. "I knew you wouldn't. Will you be friends with me?"

Lord Waldemere assented, and held out his hand. The boy laid his tiny hand in it confidently, and the compact of friendship was sealed to Arthur's entire satisfaction.

"You will come and see me again, won't you?" asked the boy. "I want to see you every day and hear how mamma is. When I see her I shall tell her she needn't be afraid of you, for you are my friend, and have promised not to hurt her."

"I will come every day to see you," said the marquis. "I must go now, though. Good-bye."

Arthur said good-bye cheerfully, and his lordship rode on.

When he had gained some distance he looked back, seeing the boy still on the gatepost, gazing after him with a longing look.

That scene lingered in the mind of the marquis throughout the day.

For some inexplicable reason, Arthur had taken a liking to him, and his lordship thought how easy it would be to win the boy's confidence and carry him away for a few weeks, during which Miss Wycherly should know something of the anguish he had endured.

He had no wish to cause the boy one pang of grief, but he reflected that he might make him happy and contented somewhere, and that when Alethea had suffered sufficiently he would restore her son to her.

This thought received impetus from the treatment accorded him by his hostess that evening.

He followed her out upon the porch to hold conversation with her, but she haughtily repulsed him, informing him that she was in no mood for talking, and desired solitude.

Yet a few minutes later her silvery laugh rang out upon the evening air, and he heard her voice responding gaily to some remark of the baronet.

His lordship's resolve was taken.

He would repay her scorn with interest. For his mortification she should endure the keenest suffering of which her heart was capable. For a few weeks her life should be utterly desolate, and then he would restore her son and return to his Welsh hermitage to spend his remaining days in solitude.

He did not falter in this resolve.

Intending no harm to Arthur, and only mental suffering to Arthur's mother, and remembering his blighted life, he felt that he could be content with his proposed revenge, small as it was, compared with that he had promised himself.

"She has lost Layne already, it seems," he thought, "and now she shall mourn in secret for her son."

He retired to rest that night full of his schemes of revenge, and awakened at an early hour the next morning eager to execute them.

Immediately after breakfast he mounted his horse and rode away from the Castle, proceeding towards a rural village some twenty miles distant, which he had visited once during his stay at Wycherly Castle.

His horse went over the ground swiftly, and his ride was more pleasant than otherwise.

His lordship remembered to have noticed, on the occasion of his visit to the village in question, a roomy old building, with comfortable gardens, in which a score of boys were at play.

A painted sign proclaimed the edifice as belonging to a "boy's school," and it occurred to him that this place might afford a pleasant and secluded refuge for the petted son of Miss Wycherly.

Several boys were at play in the garden as Lord Waldemere rode up to the school, and he observed that they all looked happy and merry.

Dismounting in the court-yard, and leaving his horse to the care of a groom, Lord Waldemere was conducted to the reception-room, where he was immediately joined by the proprietor of the establishment.

He was an elderly gentleman, with a portly figure and a benevolent face, illumined by a kindly smile—just the man, a physiognomist would have said, to win the affections of children and to guide and instruct them.

He had been a clergyman, but his voice had failed him, and he had chosen his present pursuit by which to earn a livelihood. His school had deservedly a very high name, and he was loved and respected by his pupils, who regarded him as a wise and affectionate father.

The marquis felt an instinctive confidence in his goodness and wisdom, and explained that he had a ward whom he desired to place for a short time at school, and whom he would bring on the morrow if agreeable.

"The school is at present closed, my lord," answered the teacher. "It is the summer vacation."

"But I saw several lads in the garden—"

"They are pupils who are obliged to remain here throughout the year, my lord. Two of them are sons of General Willoughby, who is in India, and the other boys are either from India or are orphans who have no home besides this!"

"Could you not take my ward, sir, as a boarder, then?" eagerly inquired his lordship.

A favourable reply was given, the marquis handed his card to the teacher, with his own address upon it, remarking that he was spending a little time in the neighbourhood, and would bring his ward within a day or two.

His arrangements fully made, Lord Waldemere took his departure, and set out on his return to Wycherly Castle.

His breast was full of exultant thoughts as he galloped onwards. He congratulated himself on being upon the eve of consummating his long-thought-of revenge, and he pictured the anguish the young mother would endure at the loss of her son.

And then he thought of the boy, the spirited, impulsive boy.

The kiss that Arthur had given him at the hidden cottage, his expressions of love on the preceding day, and the intellectual beauty of the child, aroused his admiration, and awakened within him a sentiment of pitying tenderness.

What a pity and shame that such a boy as he should have the heritage awaiting him!

With such reflections, he continued his steady progress, and arrived at the Castle in good time to dress for dinner.

His absence had not been remarked, such long rides being frequent on the part of his lordship, and he felt that nothing could occur to mar the fulfilment of his scheme, especially as Richard Layne, who dined at the Castle, announced his intention of going to town next morning, to fulfil some necessary commissions for the amateur actors and actresses in the proposed tableaux.

This announcement was received with gratification by all, for Richard's taste was to be relied upon—but by none with more joy than that experienced by Lord Waldemere.

"My way will be quite clear!" he thought, with a thrill of satisfaction. "With Layne absent, I shall have no difficulty in carrying out my intention."

(To be continued.)

THE bronze of the cannon of the Confederate steamer Merrimac has been made into bells by a Troy manufacturer. One of these bells, weighing 3,527 lbs., was placed in a church in Oswego, New York, a few weeks since.

THE Ex-Duke of Nassau has sent the Grand Cross of the order Adolph to M. Barthélemy Chabert. When the Prussians entered Wiesbaden the duke sent the valuable contents of his cellars at Biebrich to the custom-house at Straßburg, where the dépôt was kept in safety. But it is not as generally known that the duke likewise had all his property in the form of jewels, pictures, *objets d'art*, and furniture packed in cases and consigned to M. Chabert, who preserved it with the utmost care, and restored it to the duke on his demand. The cross of the order Adolph has been bestowed in acknowledgment of this service.

FIELD CRICKETS.—On getting well upon the plains, I found every inch of ground covered with field crickets; they were as thick on the ground as ants on a hill; the mules could not tread without stepping on them; not an atom or vestige of vegetation remained, the ground was as clear as a planed floor. It was about twenty good long miles to the next water, and straight across the sand plains and for that entire distance the crickets were as thick as ever. It is impossible to estimate the quantity; but when you suppose a space of ground twenty-seven miles long, and how wide I know not, but at least twice that, covered with crickets as thick as they could be packed, you can roughly imagine what they would have looked like if swept into a heap.—J. K. Lord's "The Naturalist in Vancouver's Island."

MASKS OF LOVE.—Very frail, for the most part, are the masks of love. A breath blows them away, and a tear dissolves them into nothingness; they fall off at the faintest touch of a tender hand, and are transparent to all but the eyes of the beloved. But to him, by some strange glamour of the fancy, the flimsiest veil that can be worn becomes as impenetrable as a six-inch plank, and a hollow mask, loose and slipping aside at every turn, with the eyes of love gleaming through like stars on a winter's night, is as firmly fixed as the eternal tomb—as desolate, as dark, and as empty. Many are the masks which maidenly shyness, and many those which womanly reserve, fashion for love. The most general pattern is that of indif-

ference, which often gets itself accepted when it fain would be refused, and which sometimes puts its wearer to the unmasking of her own free will, if she would not be left for ever under the disguise. Then there is the mask of petulance, which is a kind of baby anger; and the mask of jealousy, which simulates every other passion under heaven; and the mask of coquetry, which now is burning hot, and now ashen cold, leaving the poor beholder in bewilderment as to which is the true complexion after all, and what the real reading of the erotic thermometer. But still and always, though everyone else can see through the disguise, the beloved is stone blind; and the mask, whatever it may be, holds good for the true face beneath.

BREATHING OUT OF DOORS AND IN THE HOUSE.

WHEN a man draws a breath of air into his lungs the numerous little cavities of the lungs are filled with the air, which is a mixture of oxygen and nitrogen. A portion of the oxygen passes, by the mysterious action of the endosmosis, through the membrane of the lungs, into the blood, which has been distributed on the opposite side of the membrane to receive it.

The blood, having absorbed the oxygen, carries it, through the arteries, all over the system into the minute capillary blood-vessels, and here it is brought into immediate contact with the food, which, after its digestion, had been poured into the blood. A portion of the carbon of the food combines with the absorbed oxygen, forming carbonic acid, and generating precisely the same amount of heat that the same quantity of carbon would generate if burned in the state of coal in a furnace.

It is this heat which keeps up the temperature of the system, and it is the fundamental condition for all those vital actions which constitute life. Life depends upon the perpetual filling of the lungs with oxygen; hence if the windpipe be closed by a rope around the neck, or if the mouth and nostrils be immersed in water, death quickly ensues.

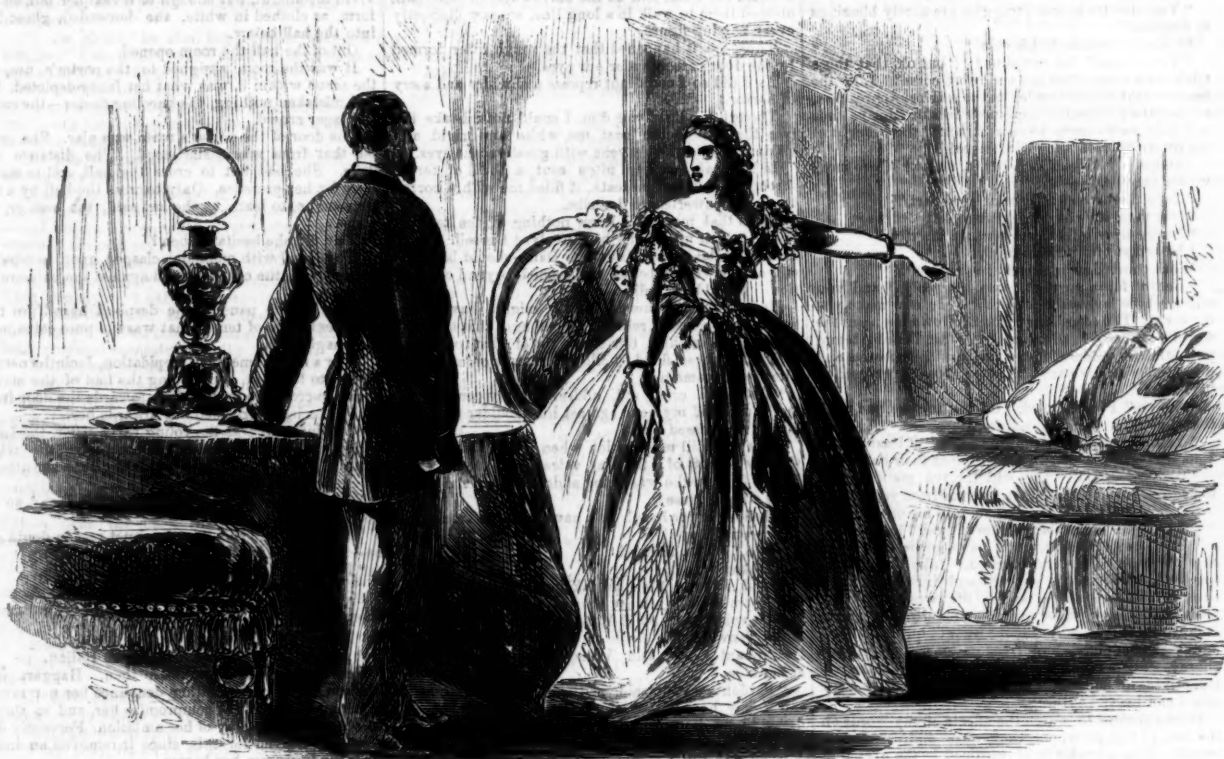
The air that is breathed out of the lungs is mostly nitrogen and carbonic acid, with but little of that oxygen which is the life-giving element. If a person be sitting in a room where the air is confined and still, when a volume of air comes from his lungs it fills the space about his mouth and nostrils, and the next breath that he draws in is mostly this air which has just previously passed through his lungs. As he continues to breathe the same air over and over, it becomes more and more deprived of its oxygen, and more and more surcharged with carbonic acid; consequently, his vital functions become less and less vigorous.

On the other hand, if a man be walking in the street while he is breathing, when he throws out a quantity of air from his lungs his head is carried along away from it before he draws in another breath, and he thus gets a fresh supply of air with its full richness of oxygen at every breath. Hence the vigour imparted to the system by exercise in the open air, and hence the importance of perfect ventilation to those confined in houses.

Besides combining with carbon in the blood, oxygen also combines with iron, changing it from the brown protoxide to the red peroxide—the rouge of the silver-smiths. It may be that the more perfect oxidizing of the iron in the blood is one reason for the rosy cheeks of those who live out of doors.

MR. KENNETH MACLEAY, R.S.A., who has been for some time passed in Aberdeenshire painting various pictures for her Majesty, and for the Prince of Wales at Abergeldie Castle, has been further honoured by a command from the Prince to paint a whole length portrait of his Royal Highness in full Highland costume as 'Lord of the Isles.'

In all parts of France there have been heavy rains, and wines, fruits, and all the productions of the soil have suffered everywhere, in certain districts deplorably. In Burgundy, one of the most important wine countries, hail has followed rain, and has destroyed what it spared. The poor peasants are in great tribulation, as their losses are ruinous—the expected gains of a year vanished, the labour of a year gone for nothing. Even truffles are in a sad plight. In some places the poor people have sat down and wept, in others they have had recourse to special prayers in churches and to processions through the fields. In some they have promenade images of saints. Strange to say, the clergy, though they have, as in duty bound, encouraged the prayers, the processions, and the parading of saints, have always insisted upon being paid for their services, albeit the peasants have little to give. In some villages they have charged as much as 20*l.* for the parading of an image. It is not stated, however, that the exhibition of those figures of stone and wood has done any good.



THE WRONG DRESS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Golden Mask," "The Stranger's Secret," "Man and His Idol," "The Warning Voice," &c., &c.

CHAPTER LI.

SURPRISED.

Thou from the first, unborn, undying love,
Albeit we gaze now on thy glories near,
Before the face of God did breathe and move,
Though night, and pain, and ruin, and death reign here,
Thou foldest like a golden atmosphere
About our lives. Tennyson.

OVERCOME with mingled terror and delight, I fainted in the arms that had rescued me from death, and Oliver bore me, more dead than alive, to a distance from the burning house.

He watched the progress of the fire, and the red light of the flames was lurid on his face.

The house was doomed.

Assistance had come too late to save it from destruction, even under ordinary circumstances; but in this instance there were special dangers which those who readily lent their assistance in getting the flames under had not calculated on.

The first intimation of this was given in a sudden change that came over the appearance of the fire.

As a new portion of the building was attacked, the light—not only upon the faces of the crowd and the scene around them, but the very clouds floating in the sky overhead—suddenly changed in colour.

It became of a vivid purple, then of a ghastly green.

People gazing in one another's faces saw them hideous and corpse-like.

"It is the effect of chemicals," they had time to say.

"He was a chemist, then?"

"Yes."

"Who knows, then, there may be danger——"

The rest was lost.

In the moment of its utterance a report as of a mine sprung under their feet filled the night, and with it came a shock so fierce and violent that the terrified spectators were dashed one against the other, or thrown powerless to the ground.

Darkness and the rolling away of dense clouds of sulphurous smoke succeeded.

Then fragments of the burning house—stones, and planks, and timbers—came raining down on the heads of the crowd with a startling clatter.

[LOSING A CORONET.

The monotonous throbbing of the engine ceased. Shrieks and piteous moans broke from unseen lips! Direst confusion, horror, and dismay prevailed.

With the passing away of the smoke, the flames were seen to break out again—green, and red, and yellow, but rapidly recovering their natural hues as the chemicals were consumed.

The greatest danger was over.

Horried at this scene, Oliver rushed from the spot to which he had retreated, and eagerly sought to ascertain the extent of the mischief done.

Had lives been lost? Were serious injuries sustained?

He and the rest put these questions with frantic avidity.

They were not easily answered.

After a time it was found that a volunteer fireman, in the act of ascending a ladder at the moment of the explosion, had fallen dead, and that many close to the burning pile were injured more or less.

Consternation at first kept the crowd silent. Then came a revulsion, and the strong feeling was one of indignation against Gasparo. The storing up of these dangerous substances was declared infamous, and when it oozed out that the man who had been guilty of the offence was a foreigner—and an Italian—the popular feeling was intensified to a tenfold degree.

It is as natural for an Englishman to suspect and dislike foreigners as it is for foreigners to return those feelings with interest.

On Oliver's part his resentment against Gasparo was mingled with a feeling of intense thankfulness.

The explosion was long over, and the sinking fire shed but a feeble glow over the trees and buildings surrounding it, as I opened my eyes with returning consciousness. The strange scene, and the unusual sounds, caused me to start up in alarm; but Oliver's face, as it bent over mine, reassured me.

By the time the fire had burned itself out, Oliver had apprized me of all that had happened—including what I have stated in regard to the miserable Dan, of whose ultimate fate we were then ignorant.

"And now," said he, "it behoves us to make the best use of this opportunity for your safety and our future happiness. Gasparo and his accomplices will be ignorant of what has happened to you. Let us take advantage of that ignorance, and make at once for some humble and secure retreat, whence you can fly should farther dangers threaten. You do not hesitate to trust me?"

The question revived in my mind the impression Gasparo had endeavoured to produce as to my lover's faithlessness.

I thought of the letter he had placed in my hands.

"Yes, Oliver," I said, "I will trust you, in spite of appearances, in spite of your own words."

He looked amazed and uneasy.

"My own words?" he repeated as a question.

His pained and bewildered looks distressed me. As briefly and as delicately as I could, I explained to him the nature of the letter I had read. As I proceeded, his pale, handsome face crimsoned with indignation.

"Infamous!" he presently burst out, unable farther to restrain his emotion. "Those words were, indeed mine. They were written in my own hand."

It was now my turn to look troubled.

"But," he continued, "they referred wholly and absolutely to yourself."

"To me?"

"Yes. In my anguish on discovering your loss I wrote appealing, fervently, to those who might have a clue to it, to Violet Maldon and Jacintha——"

"Oh! I understand all this," I interposed.

"In those letters I poured out the anguish of my heart, and used language the fervour of which——"

"Was seized on as a means of raising a barrier between us. I comprehend the infamous proceeding."

He took the hand I placed in his, and pressed it tenderly.

Joy, ineffable joy, sparkled in his eyes and flushed his cheek. Yet the tears glistened on his eyelids and choked his utterance, and pressing me to his breast, he strove to speak of his love and happiness.

Oh, blissful moment snatched in the midst of trouble!

The sinking flames, gorged with the destruction of the house of wickedness, faintly lit up the scene. The commotion which had attended the fire and the loss of life increased rather than diminished.

Suddenly Oliver turned from the sight on which our eyes had hitherto been riveted, and drew me away.

"Come, darling," he said, "I am tired of horrors. I am weary of a life that yields me nothing but misery."

"Nothing?" I asked, in a half-reproachful tone.

"Forgive me," he replied; "but oh, how hard our fate is, when love itself is mingled with sorrow! Why, why should we have thus been singled out for endless persecution? Happy in our mutual love, we might have retired from the busy world—we might have left it to its ambitions and perplexities, and remained content with the happiness our own hearts afforded us. But, no—no! We are the sport of destiny. For us peace and repose are impossible."

"Will you forgive me, Oliver," I asked, "if I thank heaven that it is so?"

He turned on me, half surprised, half angry. "You thank heaven——" he began.

"Yes; for trials and struggles are surely blessings in disguise."

Oliver clasped me to his side.

"True—true!" he exclaimed; "but oh, that those trials were over—that the end were come! Like the beacon-light which recedes as the mariner approaches, so does the prospect of happiness in store for us fade and fade as we seem to hear it, until the thought of the future oppresses me with despair."

"Despair?" I ejaculated. "Oh, no no! Once more we are together——"

"True; but we meet here only to part."

"Not yet—oh, not yet," I returned.

"Nay, our own interests demand the step."

I looked at him incredulously.

What were these interests, I asked.

"Reflect for a moment," was his reply, "and you will see how impossible it is that I can now make you my own. The step I have taken throws me upon the world—a beggar! Do you think that I could tempt you—that I could suffer you to share the miseries and privations of a life such as I see in hideous perspective before me? Impossible!"

"No, no," I interrupted, "do not torture me with that thought. I cannot endure it."

"You do not know them," he said, "at least not as I do. You have experienced wrong at their hands?"

"Oliver," I said, "you will forgive me if I seem to urge that which should rather come from your lips?"

Surprise brought a hasty flush into his cheek.

"You have some plan for our future?" he asked.

"Yes," was my reply. "I have grown weary of this life of peril and concealment. Like you, I hunger for a life of simple pursuits and innocent enjoyment. The prospect of such a life was revealed to me within those walls, now smouldering in ruins. In a word, Oliver, why should we not quit this land, and seek happiness and freedom on some distant shore? There are difficulties, you will say—they are incentives to action. There are dangers—by your side I can brave anything."

It was curious to watch the effects of my words on the face of him to whom they were addressed. It brightened as a tender light gleamed in the eyes that looked pensively into mine.

"You have read my own thoughts, darling," he said. "I, too, have longed for those distant lands where honesty is possible, and independence crowns the labour of the hands. But——"

He hesitated, and the brightness faded.

"You have fears for me?" I asked.

"No! But the path is closed even to freedom. I am penniless. I can take nothing from those I have served so ill. I can hope nothing from others."

It was too true. In my impetuosity, I had not thought of the means necessary to realize my bright vision: now that I did so, it seemed to fade into illimitable distance. My only hope was in the generosity of Violet Maldon. That she would advance money, to be repaid at some distant day, I had no doubt. But would Oliver accept this aid?

I doubted it.

His independent spirit, I felt sure, would rise in opposition at the idea.

And even should he entertain it, what means had I of communicating with Violet, who for all I knew might at that moment be a prisoner, hopelessly in Gasparo's power.

So the bright path we would have wandered in did, indeed, seem closed against us. It was sad, most sad.

At another time the thought of our helplessness would have made me sad, if not angry; but not then. No! the consciousness of Oliver's pure and trusting love filled me with a happiness that the desolate present and the dark future could not affect.

The remains of the miserable victims destroyed by the explosion had been borne away, and a search had been commenced, with the view of ascertaining whether any unfortunate being had perished in the burning house itself.

This search had resulted in a discovery.

And as we stood together, silent after Oliver's last words, we soon became conscious of a stir and commotion in the throng, and then it was clear that there was a movement in our direction.

Some of the crowd had parted from the rest and were moving towards us.

My first feeling was one of alarm, and instinctively I clung to Oliver, clasping his hands so that I might draw him from the spot. Soon, however, it became clear that there was no cause for terror. The dark forms of those huddled together in a moving mass advanced but slowly, evidently impeded by something they were bearing.

As they drew nearer we could see that this something was a charred and blackened door, wrenched from the house by the force of the explosion, and that upon it there lay what was evidently a human form partially hidden under a sack.

Onward they came, choosing a path that wound beneath the trees, and as the narrowness of the path obliged them to walk in a long line, we saw distinctly every passing figure.

Thus, too, it happened that the rough litter formed by the door passed under our eyes.

As it did so I could not repress a shudder and a cry of horror.

Though the light was dim, I could not mistake the face that was borne past me, white and rigid and staring up into the heavens with great vacant eyes.

In life that face had often sent a thrill of terror through my veins; in death, it filled me with a horror that I am powerless to describe.

Up to that moment I knew nothing of the terrible fate in which my enemy had involved himself. That Dan—the staid, grim, inhuman Dan—should be lying still and powerless before me seemed beyond conception. I could not believe it.

Under the circumstances I might have expected a sense of relief at the thought that he could harm me no farther; but the sight of that upturned face and those fixed, hollow, expressionless eyes utterly overcame me.

"Look!" I cried out, addressing my companion, and then I hid my head against his shoulder until the horror had passed by.

This was still my position when I was startled by the low accents of a familiar voice close to my ear. It was Oliver, who was leaning against the wall and watching me.

"Julian Gower here! You have witnessed this terrible scene, then?"

"Yes," Oliver faltered.

I looked up.

Could I have been mistaken in that voice? I thought not, and a glance showed me I was right.

The voice was that of Vivian Gower's wife. She stood there gazing upon us with a malicious but triumphant smile, and Vivian Gower himself was at her side.

"Pardon me," she said, with mock courtesy, as I raised my head—it was still Oliver whom she addressed—"I did not notice your companion."

"It is only a friend," he faltered.

"Indeed! But I would not have intruded if I had known——"

She faltered, purposely I knew, but made no show of leaving us.

"Permit me to introduce you," said Oliver, confused, and hardly conscious of the words that escaped his lips.

I bowed, and the thin, wasted, trembling lady did the same.

And as we bowed I felt her keen gray eyes riveted upon my face. I knew that she recognized me. With a violent flush and beating of the heart, I was self-conscious that she had surprised the secret, and got to the heart of the mystery at last.

There was a pause of a second, of a minute—an hour as it appeared to me.

During that moment I believe that the woman's trembling lips could not shape the words she designed to utter. When she did speak her voice was low, almost inaudible, and in sound it was unlike her own.

"What name?" she asked—still with extreme suavity—"excuse me, but I did not catch it."

Oliver trembled.

"A lady—a stranger here"—he faltered; "I thought it hardly necessary——"

"To mention it?"

"No."

"You were right."

"Indeed!"

"Yes; it was unnecessary."

"You have met already, then?"

"We have."

"And her name is——"

"Is Julia Gower. She is the daughter of the impostor who has the audacity to call himself Sir Gower Anselm Gower, baronet."

Trembling with the intensity of the moment's excitement, yet the lady drew herself up proudly as she spoke, uttering these daring words with the air of an empress.

And as I listened to them my heart died within me. I gasped for breath. Then a deafening sound as of rushing water came into my ears, and the air seemed as if it changed to flame before my eyes.

So horribly conscious was I that the crisis had come.

CHAPTER LII.

LOSING A CORONET.

Robbed, robbed of life's illusions sweet,
Lore dead outside her closed door,
With passion fainting at her feet,
To wake no more. *John Ingelow.*

FEELING her way in the darkness, Jacintha reached the stairs. There was light upon them, moonlight,

pouring in from the lantern above. Not bright, vivid moonlight, but enough to reveal her tall, stately form, as clothed in white, she descended, ghost-like, into the hall below.

Out of the hall the room opened.

It was the room assigned to the porter's use, and the scene within it was what her fancy depicted. She had mistaken nothing, the kneeling doctor—the earl—the eager crowd.

The door of the porter's room was ajar. She could see that from where she stood. The distance was little. She had but to cross the hall, and to startle them by her presence. Only to cross the hall by a few steps and so to learn, as she had said, the best or the worst.

Why did she hesitate, then?

Why stand with one hand clasped upon her palpitating heart, the other pressed against the balustrades for support?

Even as she paused, she despised herself for this weakness, born of terror, that was the pure coinage of the imagination.

After a few moments of trepidation, Jacintha nerved herself to the task, and leaving the foot of the stairs, began to cross the marble flags towards the door from which the light streamed out towards her.

Standing near was the young earl's sister, the Lady Juliet, and no sooner did she perceive the white figure of Jacintha looking towards her, than she uttered an exclamation of terror.

But Jacintha caught her by the hand and so reassured her.

"Tell me," said she, "for I cannot rest in doubt—is he—the poor wretch—absolutely dead?"

"Beyond all question," replied the ladyship.

"The distinction that decides?"

"Yes."

"He holds out no hope?"

"None."

A sigh of infinite relief escaped the Italian.

Her fears were groundless, then. Haggart was silenced. He could neither denounce her nor reveal anything which might compromise her, and so throw an obstacle in the way of her ambition. Fervently did she thank heaven for this, since it removed an indescribable load from her bosom.

Still absent from Gorewood Place, Jacintha was ignorant of the terrible catastrophe thus happening.

She was spared the sight of the great scheme, the artfully conceived and daringly planned imposition, crumbled to dust by a mere accident.

Enough that she remained at the Abbey, the guest of the Earl of Morant, and that the part she was called on to play there taxed all her ingenuity and exhausted all her resources.

She had dared much.

The blow that served to rid her of the midnight prowler whom she had addressed as Haggart was struck in the moment of desperation, but with a full knowledge of the consequences that might hang upon it.

The blow might silence an enemy whom nothing but death could silence; it might leave her free to accept the address and become the wife of the infuriated earl.

Yes, she was not unmindful of these facts; but, on the other hand, she could not shut her eyes to other and less gratifying consequences which might possibly result.

"If he is only dead!" she had exclaimed.

Her unnatural wish was gratified.

The man was dead.

Beyond all question it was a lifeless corpse which lay on the table in the porter's room.

So far she was safe.

If Haggart had gone, and if the secret by means of which he tyrannized over her were locked within those rigid lips, what meant the perturbation so strongly expressed in the face of the Earl of Morant as she encountered him in the hall?

"He has left the secret behind him," she thought, the fearful suggestion flashing like lightning through her brain.

It was at an early hour on the following morning that they met in the gardens.

The face of the earl was both sad and stern.

That he was deeply moved she could not doubt. Had she done so, his voice, when he addressed her, would have been sufficient to establish the fact.

"I am glad that you are here," he said.

And in how different a tone to that in which he spoke when breathing words of passionate admiration but a few hours ago!

"May I ask you to step into my library with me?" he added.

She inclined her head proudly; but with a qualm of trepidation and misgiving at heart.

The earl led the way.

As Jacintha entered, the earl motioned her to a seat with a courteous wave of his hand.

His lordship turned the key with a sharp click. Then he drew a chair towards the light, halting, however, at some yards distant from the seat Jacintha occupied.

"I am afraid," he then began, with great self-possession, "I am afraid that I shall be obliged to mention something which will distress you."

She inclined her head.

"I am afraid that I shall be compelled to give you pain—not half the pain, trust me, that I suffer in the thought of doing so."

His lips trembled, and he passed a hand rapidly across his brow.

"Last night," he proceeded, "I believed that you, as my guest, had suffered a gross outrage. I thought—and heaven knows with regret!—that you had been attacked beneath my roof by a desperate ruffian, and that in self-defence—purely in self-defence—you had done him an injury that had resulted in his death. That was my very natural impression."

"It was the truth," said Jacintha, quietly.

"Was it?" asked the earl, leaning forward so as to lend increased earnestness to the question.

"Oh, if your lordship doubts my word—"

"Stay!" he cried, rising to his feet, "I will not doubt you without reason. I will act calmly, fairly, generously by you. I will allow nothing to weigh against you or to prejudice you—I will but state facts, and wait to hear your own explanation of them before I come to conclusions which may be unjust, unfair, and cruel towards you."

Jacintha turned on one side, so that her arm hung lightly over the back of her chair, and simply nodded.

Annoyed at this levity, the earl proceeded:

"When I sympathized with you over the peril to which you had been exposed, I took one thing for granted—I thought this ruffian was a stranger to you."

"at lord!"

"Oh, it is a simple matter—was I right, yes or no?"

"If your object is to insult me—" the Italian began, rising as she spoke.

His lordship also rose.

"Pray, pray, let us be serious," he exclaimed; "remember my happiness is at stake in this. More than that—but let us proceed. The question you hesitate to respond to I will answer for you. That man was not a stranger to you."

She was silent.

"So far from it, he was a man whom you knew but too well, and whom you had reason to regard with terror and aversion."

"You are pleased to imagine this," said Jacintha.

"Yes," he replied, "because I will not suffer myself to believe in something worse."

"Worse?" she asked, in genuine amazement.

"Yes: because I cannot think so badly of you as to believe that you are linked with him in a bond of infamous atrocity, and that it was at your connivance and as a partner with you in a contemplated crime that he entered my house. No, no! I will not believe that."

"I am glad that you have the fairness and manliness to do me this justice," said the Italian, scornfully. "You do not think that I became your guest in order that I might become accessory to a burglary on these premises?"

"This is trifling," exclaimed the earl, with a pained look.

"Excuse me! but this is really the gist of the whole matter. You acquit me of these intentions. No doubt because your good sense tells you that I should not have commenced my rapacious proceedings by purloining my own jewels and valuables. Of the articles found on that unhappy man every one chances to be my property. It was with the spoils of my jewel-box that he loaded himself, and you are considerate enough to say that, in the face of this, I was the victim rather than the accomplice! Again I thank you."

Her manner was at once haughty and aggressive. Bitterness of tone pointed the words that escaped her lips, and the young earl could not conceal the anguish with which he listened.

"I have said," he resumed, "that you feared this man. I am willing to believe that he was a tyrant, of whom you lived in mortal terror, and that he came into this house with the sole view of making you his victim."

"And if so? It should win me your pity rather than your reproaches."

"It should; it would do so—were you the innocent woman I had a right to suppose. Nay, nay, curb your indignation. I am here to speak plainly. It is a fearful duty that I come here to discharge, and it does not admit of fine words or ambiguous sentences."

"You believe me guilty of what?"

She put the question harshly and abruptly.

"I could answer you in one word," he replied.

"Do so."

The earl looked at her in amazement, for those words were like the challenge of unflinching innocence.

"No," he said, "I prefer to give an explanation of what I do—to offer you the grounds of my suspicion. And, first, you must pardon me if I do not believe your statement as to the manner of this man's death."

"No?"

"The very fact that you knew him—knew him most intimately—proves to me that your account of the terror created by his appearance and of the conflict between you, in which he received the fall that proved fatal to him, is incorrect. There might have been a contest between you, but not of the nature you describe. He was not forced back step by step; he did not fall backwards down the opening behind the sliding panel."

"You say this—" she began.

"Because I have proof of it."

"Proof?"

"Certainly. Had your statement been true, the body of the man would have been found lying upon its back. The injuries resulting in death would have appeared upon the base of the skull."

"Unless he turned over in falling!"

"Which was impossible: the width of the aperture would not have permitted it. That supposition, therefore, I am compelled to abandon, and then the man was found at the bottom of the ladder he had never descended, with a wound in the forehead of which he died."

"And you infer from this—"

"That while he was in the act of retreating, while he stooped to discern the way by which he had ascended to the room, you took advantage of the momentary advantage offered you, and dealt the blow which cost him his life."

Jacintha's face grew whiter and yet more rigid as she listened.

"You have persuaded yourself of this," she said, "and it is useless to argue against an idea."

"Do you believe that I did this in self-defence?"

His lips quivered.

There was an awful pause. Then he answered:

"No!"

"You are aware, my lord," she presently said, "of the full import of that answer?"

"I am."

"You know that it implies that I acted with a calm, deliberate motive of the worst kind?"

"Yes."

"That I intentionally took this man's life?"

"Clearly."

"That in effect"—she rose to her feet as she gave angry expression to these words—"in effect—I murdered him?"

"Yes," replied the earl, solemnly; "as there is a heaven above us, that is what I do believe."

The accused woman glanced at him for an instant with her black, flashing eyes; then she dropped back into the seat from which she had risen.

The Earl of Morant regarded her with a mixture of terror and pity.

"Heaven knows how reluctantly I arrive at this conclusion," he presently said; "how it lacerates my heart to see you thus, to know what I have learned, and to shape the words I force myself to utter. Towards you I have felt as I have never done towards living woman. You have inspired me with a passion that the world would designate an infatuation, and in strong natures like mine impressions of this sort take deep root and are ineradicable."

She did not reply, and he proceeded.

"That you were tempted, strongly tempted into this act, I do not doubt. That you were tempted beyond your strength, my religion forbids me to believe; but that you were sorely tried and yielded in a moment of weakness I have little question. To that extent I pity and commiserate you. But none the less do I regard you with that feeling which the shedder of blood always inspires, even in the hearts of the guilty."

"You spoke of temptation," said Jacintha, in a hoarse whisper, "but you know little of the strength of that against which I had to contend."

"Pardon me," said the earl, "but I know all."

"All?"

"Yes, absolutely. I know that, whether you really returned my affection or not, you were genuinely ambitious of sharing the coronet I had to offer you."

"Well?"

"I know that this ambition placed before you the choice of two crimes."

"Two crimes?"

"Assuredly. There were two alternatives. One was the destruction of this man, whose very existence formed a barrier in your path."

"And the other?"

"That of accepting me as your husband when,

legally, you were not in a position to take that step."

"This is surmise," exclaimed Jacintha.

"It is the truth," was his lordship's reply.

"And you—how do you know this?" she demanded.

"I will show you."

Saying this, he turned to a small packet of papers which he had taken from the body of the deceased, and which lay on the table beside him.

The moment her eyes fell on them a spasmodic twitching of the Italian's face showed that she understood their import and knew that the worst was come.

"This," said the earl, unfolding a mere scrap of paper, old, worn, and discoloured by age, "this is the certificate of a marriage celebrated between Isaac Robert Haggart and Jacintha Gasparo, at the church of St. —"

The agitated woman waved her hand impatiently, as if to urge him to desist.

"The other," she demanded, "what is that?"

"Unlike the other, it does not appear to be an original document. It is a copy from a church register, and sets forth the marriage at a subsequent date between the same Jacintha Gasparo and one Jerome —"

Jacintha arose.

"Spare me the recital of the rest," she said; "you are right. The temptation offered me was irresistible. I believed that with Haggart silenced, and Jerome in my power, as I hold him at this moment, I might remove the barrier which the crime of my double marriage placed in my way to a coronet. Idiot that I was; the very step that was to have secured this result has defeated me. But come, I have endured the torture of this scene too long. You are prepared to denounce me. Do it—and at once!"

The earl stared at her as if doubting whether he had heard aright.

"You have but to throw open that door," she continued, "to expose me in my darkest colours. Sooner or later you will do this. Do it now."

With the gesture of a queen she stretched her white arm towards the door.

The earl rose as if to obey. He took one step towards the door, then turned, hesitated, and regarded her with a look of mingled admiration and compassion.

(To be continued.)

KING VICTOR EMMANUEL has just instituted a new order of knighthood, to be called the order of the Leone d. St. Maro, according to some; that of the Italian Lion according to others. It is to take rank immediately after the order of the Annunziata, which last is only given to crowned heads, members of reigning houses, and generalissimos.

THE EARTHQUAKE IN FRANCE.—This earthquake was felt over a large portion of France. At Paris the shock was felt most distinctly in the Sixteenth Arrondissement. In the Rue Molière the house No. 4 was so shaken that the residents were suddenly awakened out of sleep, and fled in great alarm. At Boulogne and Anteuil the beds were shaken, and glasses standing near one another on tables and shelves were heard ringing. At Créteil, Montreuil, Ville d'Avray, and Haut-Sèvres similar phenomena were observed. At Tours nearly all the inhabitants were aroused from sleep. A correspondent there writes to the *Paris* that he was rocked in his bed like a child in a cradle. At one of the principal hotels of the town a cornice was thrown down, and at one of the cafés all the beer in the cellar thickened. At Limoges a strongly pronounced vibratory movement from east to south was felt for three seconds. Similar accounts are transmitted from Rouen, Nantes, Angers, and Angoulême. The shock lasted about six seconds, and was accompanied by a dull, heavy sound. The barometer fell six millimetres.

THE TOMB OF JAMES III. AT CAMBUSKENNETH.—Some time after the discovery of the tomb of James III. a correspondence took place between the Provost of Stirling and the Home Secretary, in which the Provost recommended that a memorial should be erected to the Scottish King. This correspondence resulted in her Majesty giving orders that the work should be done at her own expense. As from various circumstances there could be no doubt of the relics being those of James III. and his Queen, a small oak box was supplied by Sir James Alexander, of Westerton, "James III." being marked over the one in which the bones were placed. The tomb or memorial, which is of free-stone, has been erected near to the site of what constituted the high altar, and is about 4½ ft. in height, 8 ft. long, 4½ ft. broad at the base, and about 3 ft. broad at the top. On the north or left hand side the following inscription is finely cut in raised letters: "This restoration of the tomb of her ancestors was executed by command

of her Majesty Queen Victoria, A.D. 1865;" and on the right hand, or reverse side, as follows:—"In this place, near the high altar of Cambuskenneth were deposited the remains of James III. King of Scots, who died on the 11th of June, 1488, and of his Queen the Princess Margaret of Denmark." On the west end of the memorial are the Scottish arms, with the motto, "*Nemo me impune lacessit*," and on the east end the Scottish arms quartered with those of Denmark, entwined with representations of the thistle. The remains having been placed in a recess of the sarcophagus, the masonry work of the tomb was properly closed, and the work was declared completed. A square of ground, laid with gravel, and surrounded by a railing, is placed round the memorial.

KENMORE.

CHAPTER XL

THE broad-shouldered Saxon endured the crushing, painful weight upon his back—a weight that almost stopped his breath—until he could endure no more, and then he strove to change his position by raising his body upon his hands and knees.

At the first movement, however, he felt a cold hand upon his neck, and, with a frightful howl, he threw himself upon his side and stretched forth his arm. He had as lief be killed outright as to be smothered to death.

"Griffeth!"

"Eh! Is that you, master?"

"Is this you, Griffeth?"

"Yes."

"And," added Thorwald, "this is I."

"Has it gone?" asked the esquire, slowly rising to a sitting posture. "Was that your hand upon my neck?"

The watchers soon satisfied themselves that they were together, and when they had removed the chairs that had been hurled upon them they arose to their feet.

All was dark as Erebus, however, and for some time they stood where they had risen without speaking. At length a vivid stream of lightning illuminated the place, and for an instant they were enabled to see things very plainly about them.

Nothing seemed out of the way, except that the chairs had been tipped over, and the lamp extinguished.

"Where does this wind come from?" queried the knight, as the darkness once more closed upon them.

Hardly had the words dropped from his lips when a low hollow groan sounded through the apartment, followed by a sharp clanking of chains, and in another instant the wind ceased—the air was still and close—and the voice of the tempest without alone broke upon their ears.

"My soul!" gasped Griffeth, his knees shaking and his teeth chattering; "let us get away from here. If we make haste we may come out alive."

"We can never find our way in such darkness," growled Thorwald.

"Our lantern is in the next room," pursued the esquire, "and I have flint and steel in my pocket. If you wish to stay here you must stay alone. I have had enough of it."

And so the Son of Eric had had enough of it, as the audible quaking of his limbs plainly testified. He did not deny that he was in fear, and he had no farther remarks to make touching the timidity of his companion.

Another flash of lightning showed them the open doorway to the adjoining chamber, and Griffeth got through quickly enough to grasp the lantern before the gleam had died away.

He found his flint steel and tinder; and after much trouble, caused by the trembling of his hands as well as by the dense darkness, he managed to strike a light and thus ignite the wick of the lantern. The basket with two or three bottles had been left in the blue chamber, and though both the adventurers in their present unnerfed condition felt sorely the need of the generous beverage, yet neither of them cared to go back after it, nor did either ask the other to go; but as soon as the lantern had been prepared they made the best of their way from the tower, and stopped not until they reached the knight's own apartment, where other bottles were found.

After lighting a lamp and taking generous draughts of wine, the two men sat down and looked each into the other's face. Thorwald was the first to speak, and the quivering of his voice showed that he had not wholly recovered from his fright.

"Griffeth, I charge you that you never mention what we have this night seen and heard."

"Must I never mention a word of it?" demanded the esquire.

The knight knew how prone such men were to

relate the incidents of startling adventure, especially when they had themselves borne prominent part therein; and feeling that it might be impossible for his follower to keep the entire thing a secret, he wisely changed the terms of his injunctions.

"You shall promise me this. If you mention the circumstance of your being in the Ghost's Tower you will not use my name. You will not give even a hint that I have been there."

"I promise that; and may the ghost of the murdered monk come and carry me off if I break faith," replied Griffeth, solemnly. Then after a pause, he asked:

"Good master, what do you think of it?"

"What do you think of it?" returned Thorwald.

"I think I shall never distrust old Finlan again. I went to that old tower to see a ghost, and I think I saw one."

"But," said the knight, tremulously, "did you hear it speak?"

"Aye—that I did, my master. My life! What a horrible voice! It makes me cold as ice when I think of it."

"Are you sure you heard it distinctly?"

"I heard it so distinctly that I never wish to hear the like again," answered the Saxon, emphatically.

"What did the words sound like to you?"

"Deadly enough."

"But I mean, what to you seemed their purport?"

The esquire gazed into his master's face with a vacant look as though he did not fully comprehend.

"I'm sure, Sir Thorwald," he finally said, a little reluctantly, "I can hardly pretend to solve the riddle. Still, if you would know my thoughts, I can give it."

The knight nodded, and Griffeth went on:

"If I had been in your place, and the horrible spectre had spoken to me as it did to you, I should have thought it meant to frighten me."

"And perhaps it would have succeeded."

"I can't say as to that, my master, but I can assure you that I shouldn't have thought of seeking another interview."

"Very well, Griffeth, I think you heard aright; but I would not have you think I attach much importance to the ghostly words; they were the mere vapourings of an uneasy spirit. What have I to do with monks that were butchered before my Norman ancestors landed on these shores? Bah! that is the way ghosts make capital. Go to your bed, my man, and forget, if you can, that you ever heard a ghost speak."

The esquire went to his bed, and what he forgot or what he remembered matters not to us. No doubt the ghost of the bleeding brow haunted his dreams that night and for many nights succeeding.

Thorwald went to his bed also, but not to forget. It was not so much what he had seen that troubled him as what he had heard.

"Look to thyself, Son of Eric, and be sure there is a just God in heaven." What did it mean? He tried to convince himself that he might have misunderstood, but his esquire had heard the same words. Then he sought to believe that some malevolent agency had been employed to worry him, but he could find no tenable proposition upon which to hang such a conclusion. He had no doubt that he had seen a real ghost, and the only belief he could gain from his reason was that the spirits of those old murdered monks thus sought to terrify and frighten away all who intruded upon their haunts. But why had they not appeared to Aldred of Lanark? Why was it that only the spirit of a beautiful woman appeared to him?

Directly a jealous hatred of Aldred possessed his soul, and as this was a relief from the terror that had tortured him, he fell asleep, and so for a season forgot his troubles.

When he awoke the morning was well advanced, and the beams of the sun were just struggling through the clouds, which were sweeping away to the eastward.

When he met his mother she was anxious to know if he had spent the night in the Ghost's Tower. He replied that he had stopped there as long as he had desired.

At first he thought that he would tell his mother nothing at all of what he had seen, but her next question called for a direct answer, and after a little consideration he concluded to tell her the whole story, omitting only the words of ill omen that had been spoken to him.

"Did you see that woman?" the countess asked, in a tone of hushed eagerness.

"No, mother."

"Did you see anything?"

And then Thorwald told his story, omitting nothing of what he had seen, but rather aiming to give as much terror to the narrative as possible. "We waited," he concluded, "until this horrible presence had disappeared, which it did in a whirlwind of such power and fury that the heavy furniture was fairly driven around the room."

"Believing that the ghost of the woman would no appear after that, I did not think it worth while to stop, for, to tell you the truth, the prospect of a longer abode in that place was not pleasant."

"But," queried Margaret, "how is it that Sir Aldred sleeps so quietly there night after night? It puzzles me. Can it be that these horrible spectres do not appear to him?"

The Son of Eric ground his heel into the floor, and gnashed his teeth.

"Don't mention that name to me," he cried. "There is some accursed influence at work in all this, and the sooner the interloper is out of our way the better. What called him here? Why did he seek Kenmore?"

"If accident brought him here," said the countess, "it was a most untoward event, even though the life of my child was saved thereby. But," she added, as though she felt it necessary to qualify such an assertion somewhat, "I do not believe that any such event happened. Edwin would have gained the shore without any of this man's assistance."

"That is my opinion," echoed Thorwald.

"But now," pursued his mother, "Aldred of Lanark is here, and it is very evident that, if left to himself, he will remain for a long time. The earl seems to have fallen in love with him."

"You've spoken the truth," exclaimed the knight, with a fierce oath. "As surely as I am at this moment speaking with you, Atholbane loves Aldred of Lanark better than he does me. By the gods! do you think I shall submit to it all? I see the baseborn intruder bear off the love of the earl and the love of Clara Douglas at the same time. By the sacred rod of Woden, I'll put my foot down somewhere, and the dastard had best beware that his head does not fall beneath it."

Thorwald had turned away, and was upon the point of departing when his mother called him back.

"My son," she said, "I know your hot temper and your reckless daring, but I also know that you have cause for deepest enmity here. Be wise, be cautious; Clara Douglas is not for Edwin. If Aldred of Lanark shall stand between my first-born and my fair niece, I will not hesitate to lend my aid to overcome the obstacle. So, Thorwald, fear not to trust me in all things. It may be better for you if you do."

The knight thanked his mother, and assured her that she should have his confidence.

"But," he added, "we will take no farther step until after the tournament. If Aldred come forth from the lists unscathed, we may have need of co-operation."

"I hope he will not," exclaimed the countess, quickly and earnestly. "My son," she continued, with an admonitory motion of the head, "I know that you are brave and strong, and well skilled in the use of arms, and I also know that Aldred of Lanark has not many superiors of his age. And now let me tell you one thing more I know. Clara Douglas has been reared and educated to look upon brave and gallant men with something of reverence, and her feelings may be much influenced by the result you anticipate. I know you will seek to break a lance with Aldred."

"Enough, mother. I can imagine all you would say. I will meet the Knight of Lanark in the lists, and Clara Douglas shall see him go down before me. I have said it—wait for the result."

When Thorwald descended to the court he sought Siward, the armourer, to whom he proposed that they should repair to the armoury, and try a bout with the broadsword and the axe.

"Hold one moment, Sir Thorwald," cried the armourer, after they had taken their positions with sword in hand, "you forget your left foot."

"Never mind my foot, Siward. It is my sword you have to look out for."

The weapons were crossed, and in a very few moments the knight was driven back against the wall.

"You are over anxious, good master. What meant that out-of-the-way thrust at my throat?"

"I was trying an experiment," replied Thorwald, recovering himself.

"By my soul, the experiment might have cost you dear. It was a dangerous one."

The knight exhibited some slight signs of anger, but after a moment's pause he laughed, and promised not to make any more such experiments. They crossed their swords again, and this time Thorwald came off best.

"It's of no use," said the armourer, after the swords had been laid aside and the axes tried; "you are stronger than I, and your skill is superior in every way. You must find someone nearer your equal if you would test your arm."

Thorwald laid aside his axe, seemingly well pleased with the result of the trial, after which he expressed the desire that Siward would take his armour and examine it in every part. He said he was

soon to meet some of the best knights in the two kingdoms, and he wished to be prepared. He wanted every joint looked to, every rivet tested, and the whole put in the best possible condition.

"Bah!" cried the armourer's boy, when Thorwald had gone; "why did you let him handle you so easily?"

"That man may be master of Kenmore some of these days," replied Siward, with a significant nod.

"And what do you care for that?"

"Peace, boy. It doesn't cost much to give way to such a man. It makes him feel better, and surely it makes me feel no worse. It is well for him, however," continued Siward, shaking his head as though speaking half to himself, "that he did not make a second attempt at my throat. If he had I might have found it more difficult to control my arm. What in the world did he mean? It was a clear death-stroke, and never allowed at play."

"At any rate," urged the boy, who had a great reverence for his master's skill at arms, "you don't think that Thorwald could come over you in a fair bout?"

"I don't know how that might be."

"Do you think he is as good as Sir Aldred?"

"You ask too many questions, my lad."

"And I wish you'd answer some of them. Now I think that Sir Aldred is the best man, and I know that you think so, too."

"Wait until the tournament, and then we shall see. And in the meantime you must keep yourself busy, for we shall have plenty to do. Behave yourself, and you shall have a chance to see all that is to be seen when the bold knights enter the lists."

That evening, after the shadows had gathered thickly in, a servant came to the earl, and informed him that Edwin wished to see him. He found his son in his chamber, and in bed.

"Be not alarmed, dear father. I am not very ill. But I feel weak, and my breath comes hard. Perhaps I had better see the physician."

Without stopping to make further inquiry, the earl sent for the physician, and then took a seat by the bedside.

"Dear boy," he said, taking his child's thin hand, "you must not be sick now. In a few days the tournament comes off, and—"

"I shall be there to see," cried Edwin, with animation. "It is only a faintness for a short season. Some of good old Malbert's cordial will quickly revive me."

In a little while Malbert came, and when he saw the sufferer his countenance fell. He was an old man, of at least three-score years and ten, and had been the physician of Kenmore since the earl's childhood.

"Good Malbert," pleaded the boy, "please tell my father that I am not very ill. You can make me well enough to see the tournament."

The physician said he would do the best he could, and after this he sat down and took the invalid's hand in his own.

By-and-by he administered a gentle cordial, after which the patient breathed more freely, and both he and the earl sat there until the boy fell asleep.

"He will get over this," said Malbert, after they had left the patient in charge of the nurse.

"But," urged Atholbane, "I wish you to tell me truly—can he fully recover?"

The physician shook his head.

"Keep nothing from me, Malbert. I would know the worst."

"It is best you should, my lord. Therefore, I tell you, it is my judgment your son has not many weeks to live. The tide of his life is running very low. There is no particular point to which remedy can be applied, for the whole wondrous machinery of the body is worn out—worn out before its time. Be kind to him, my lord, for he will not tax your love much longer."

Silently the earl turned to his own chamber, where he sat down and wept. Not alone because his boy was dying did he weep, but because his heart was lonely and sad from other blighting hopes.

"Dark! dark! dark!" he groaned. "Life's flowers wither and fade in their early blossom. No bud of promise has ever put forth its full bloom for me."

On the following morning Edwin was better, and with Clara he walked out upon the parapet. The earl watched him, and saw that he had to lean heavily upon his cousin's arm for support. His steps were weak and tottering, and the thin, pale face had grown thinner and paler.

CHAPTER XII.

WHEN Earl Douglas and Aldred returned from Seave, the king came with them, and in his train were many brave knights and fair ladies.

Atholbane, who had been duly informed by a

special courier, rode out with a goodly array of men-at-arms to meet his sovereign, and to conduct him to his castle.

It was a grand sight, as the noble cavalcade filed over the drawbridge, and Edwin, who stood upon the parapet, felt his heart bound with new strength.

Edgar, King of Scotland, was in the early bloom of manhood—not more than five-and-thirty—of commanding presence, and possessing a face of more than ordinary beauty. He was bold and frank, and having been educated at the court of William the Conqueror, he had gained graces of deportment and conversation that distinguished him above the majority of the Scottish chiefs.

Between him and Atholbane there had existed a warm, enduring love, for it will be remembered that Maud of Perth, the earl's first wife, was a sister of the king, and during Edgar's boyhood—for he was but a mere child when his sister became Countess of Kenmore—the castle had been like a home to him.

But the troubles came which culminated in the death of Malcolm, and the sons of that ill-fated monarch were forced to flee from Scotland. When Edgar returned to assume the crown, after the deposition and imprisonment of Donald Bane, he found his sister gone, and a new countess in her place; and as he did not conceive a warm liking for Lady Margaret, he seldom visited the castle.

In time, however, when he came to understand how deeply Atholbane mourned the loss of the pure-minded, beautiful Maud, and how his heart was buried with his first and only true love, his brotherly affection warmed again into life, and though he could no longer make Kenmore the home that it had been in other years, still he loved to sit apart with the lord thereof, and talk of bygone times.

After supper the king sat by himself, and watched the movements and expressions of those about him, and there were two who seemed chiefly to claim his attention.

He looked upon the beautiful face of Clara Douglas, and then he turned towards Aldred of Lanark, and as he gazed, his face gave token of deep and grave reflection, and more than once he shook his head slowly from side to side, as though he found difficulty in collecting his thoughts—or as if some problem had presented itself which he could not readily solve.

Late in the evening, when the air was soft and balmy, and when the stars looked down with a peaceful radiance, Edgar and Atholbane walked out upon the parapet towards the western tower.

They had talked of the times that were gone—of Maud, of her gentleness and grace, of her truth and her love, and of her unhappy fate, until their spirits were weighed down with sadness, when the king changed the theme.

"Atholbane," he said, breaking a silence that had extended to some minutes, "I have taken a strange liking towards the young Knight of Lanark, and if I have not read the signs greatly amiss, your own heart holds him warmly."

"You are right, sire," returned the earl, with palpable emotion. "There is something noble in the youth, and I love him as I would love a brother."

"He was brought up under the eye of our cousin Douglas?"

"Yes, sire."

"And if I mistake not, he is the son of the old forester of Lanark?"

"You are right."

The king moved on a few paces in silence, and then said:

"I think Douglas had good cause for wishing the knight away from his castle."

"I have made no inquiries in that direction," answered the earl, evasively.

"I think," pursued Edgar, seeming not to notice his companion's reticence, "that Aldred must have been in the way of the successful accomplishment of some cherished plan, and it is not impossible that he may be as much in the way here as he was at Lanark."

"Sire, I do not understand you."

"Ah, Atholbane, you understand me very well."

The earl's troubled silence showed that he could not dispute it.

"But," continued Edgar, "take no trouble on that score. Should the time come when you deem that Aldred had best be away from here, just let me know, and I will send for him to come to my court. I should consider myself the gainer thereby."

"And I should be a loser," responded the earl.

"Be sure I shall keep him as long as I can."

"But, my brother—"

"Hush, sire. Say no more. When I think of the subject to which I know you refer I am in sore distress, and I put it from me if I can. If Edwin live all will be well."

"How so?" asked the king.

"Clara will continue to love him."

"To love him?" repeated Edgar.

"Aye—she loves him now."

The monarch gazed into his companion's face a moment, and though, by the dim starlight, he could not observe the lineaments distinctly, yet he saw enough to assure him that Atholbane was in earnest. "Sire," spoke the earl, noting Edgar's manner, "have you thought that Clara Douglas did not love my son?"

"Have you ever thought that she might love Aldred of Lanark?" demanded the king, quietly.

"I have thought it very natural that she should," replied Atholbane, honestly.

"And how can a heart like hers be divided?" queried the king.

"Perhaps," suggested the earl, "she may give Aldred a brother's place."

"Upon my life, Atholbane, you possess a wonderful power of perception. I have no doubt that the fair lady, who has no brother of her own, has the place in her heart of which you speak, filled by another. It is well, and here we will let the matter drop."

They had turned to retrace their steps when the king, upon casting his eye upwards, remarked:

"This is the haunted tower?"

"It is so called, sire."

"Strange things are seen here."

"It is so said."

"I have taken a curious fancy into my head, brother."

"Ah?"

"I am going to spend the night with Aldred."

"But, sire, your apartments are all prepared, and—"

"And what, good Atholbane?"

"It will be thought very strange, sire."

"No one but you and Aldred need to think anything about it. I will retire to the apartment you have set apart for me, and when all is quiet Aldred will come for me. He has told me some of the wonders of the blue chamber, and I have conceived an irresistible desire to see them for myself. I remember very well how many hours I spent there when I was a boy, and how happy I was when my sister's sweet face was turned upon me. Blessed Maud! Heaven rest her soul!"

"Amen!" responded the earl, with deepest reverence.

"I must watch in that chamber to-night, Atholbane."

"Do as you will, sire. I have watched, but I saw not what Aldred has seen."

The earl spoke regretfully, but presently he added, with marked energy:

"Perhaps you may see what did not appear to me. Aldred, who never knew Lady Maud, may be mistaken. Edgar, I cannot tell you what I have suffered—how this marvel works upon me—how it bears down my heart by day and by night—how it breaks my rest—how it embitters every cup. Oh, if you can solve the mystery I shall bless the hour that led you to the blue chamber."

"Rest if you can, brother, and leave me to the result of my watching. I was but a boy when Maud died—only ten years old—but every lineament of her angelic face is as fresh in my memory as though but a day had passed since the blessed impress was made."

"Ah, here come some of our friends. Douglas and Northumberland are in advance, and if I mistake not, Sir Walter of Haddington and our cousin of Stirling bear them company."

In the meantime Aldred of Lanark, who understood the plans of the king for the night, had gone to the tower to make preparation. The first object that attracted his attention upon entering the blue chamber was a basket containing bottles. He next observed that the furniture had been strangely disarranged. A nod of the head, a slight compression of the lips, and a quiet smile, signified that our hero suspected the truth. He examined the bottles, and the conclusion was arrived at, without farther debate, that the wine belonged to none of the servants.

"I am not disappointed," soliloquized the knight, as he proceeded to put the chairs in their places. "I supposed Thorwald would embrace the first opportunity to test the truth of what he heard me say in the picture gallery, and I am sure he has been here, and if I can judge by what I see, I should say that his experience was not a pleasant one."

When Aldred had put things in order, and had time for serious reflection, he found himself in trouble.

The king was coming to spend the night with him in hope of seeing the bright spirit of the beautiful woman; but would he be likely to see it? Thus far the lovely presence had appeared to himself alone; even the earl had been disappointed.

Still, let the result be what it might, Edgar could not blame him, but he sincerely hoped that there

might be no such demonstration as had evidently been made for the entertainment of Thorwald.

And again the Knight of Lanark was lost in a maze of wonder. If it were the spirit of Lady Maud that had appeared to him, what could such a sweet existence have had in common with those old monks of another age?

Why did the woman come to him, while the monk-robed spectres appeared to others? Surely it was a mystery, and he prayed heaven that in the end he might solve it.

Night wore on, and when the household had retired, Aldred repaired to the king's apartment, and informed him that he was ready to conduct him to the Ghost's Tower.

"It lacks not more than an hour of midnight, sire, and by the time we get settled down in the blue chamber—"

"The ghost will be ready for us, eh?" broke in the king, with a laugh.

But the laugh did not betray any lightness of feeling. It was rather an effort to overcome mighty feelings which he did not care to reveal.

"I cannot say as to that," returned Aldred, with a shake of the head. "I tell you plainly, sire, that I have my doubts about the appearance of the pale woman to-night. Remember, I have not urged you to go, and remember farther that I did not willingly tell you the story of what I had seen. Your own questions drew the confession from me."

"Be not troubled, good Aldred. I take the risk upon my own shoulders. If what you told me be true—I mean, if your impression be not the result of mistake—then you have seen the spirit of my dead sister, and I will make the attempt to see the same, even though a legion of dark-robed spectres come to greet me. So, my fair sir, lead the way as quickly and directly as you please, and leave the result to me."

Without farther remark Aldred took up the lantern which he had brought with him, and passed out into the corridor. They had some distance to traverse, but they reached the western tower without meeting anyone, and when they entered the large bed-chamber the guide lighted the lamp and put away the lantern.

"This is your bed, sire, if you please to occupy it."

"I shall not occupy it at present, Aldred. Let us go on to the blue chamber."

Our hero took up the lamp and led the way. "Ah," continued the king, "how natural everything looks, and how freshly the old scenes come back to my memory. Here is the chair which my sister used to occupy; and here I used to sit at her feet; and here Atholbane was wont to recline and gaze fondly and lovingly into the face of his beautiful wife. It seems but yesterday that—"

"What is it, sire? Why do you stop?"

"Did you not interrupt me?" asked the king.

"No."

"I heard something."

"So did I, sire."

"Are our ghostly visitants already upon us?"

"I cannot say. The most we can do is to sit and watch."

"Then let us do so."

"I would suggest, sire, that we remove the lamp to the other room."

"Are the ghosts afraid of light?"

"I have found it so."

"Very well. Do as you think proper."

Aldred carried the lamp into the bed-chamber, and when he returned he took a seat near the shrine.

"It must be near midnight," said Edgar. He spoke very softly, and gazed into the dim distance with an anxious look.

"It cannot be far from the hour," returned Aldred.

He would have spoken farther, but a sudden movement on the part of the king arrested him, and upon looking towards the far corner of the apartment he beheld a human form clearly revealed against the dark tapestry. Gradually a pale, cold glare surrounded the presence, and the long silvery beard and dark robe of a monk were visible.

A few moments the spectre stood there, and then it disappeared as noiselessly as it had come, and the pale light died away.

"Aldred, what is that?" There was a perceptible tremulousness in the king's voice, and his hand quivered as he rested it upon his companion's arm.

"I can only tell you, sire, that I have seen that presence twice before. It is the same, too, that appeared to the earl."

Edgar was deeply moved, but he was not afraid; and yet, had he been alone, he might have concluded that he had seen enough of the Ghost's Tower, for one night, at least. But Aldred was calm and composed,

and this gave him confidence; and he resolved that he would keep the watch awhile longer.

Half an hour passed, during which they held a conversation upon the subject naturally suggested by the occasion, and at the end of that time Aldred nodded in the chair.

The king, finding his companion inclined to doze, leaned his head against a projection of the altar, and suffered his lids to droop; but presently he became aware that a change had taken place, and he opened his eyes and raised his head, and as he did so he noticed that Aldred was also awake.

It was not the pale, cold glare which had enveloped the monkish spectre.

A soft, warm glow pervaded the far corner of the room; and, as clearly defined as though it had been a body of flesh, standing out from the sombre tapestry, appeared the form of a woman.

It was an angelic figure, robed in pure and spotless white, with the hands folded upon the breast, and the head slightly bent.

The face, pale and beautiful, wore a prayerful look; the eyes, large and soft, seemed melting into tears; and the exquisitely moulded lips were half opened, as though the tongue were ready for speech.

The king grasped his companion's arm, and when he could contain himself no longer, he spoke; and as he spoke he started to his feet and stretched forth his hands.

"Maud! My sister! Maud! Maud!"

He had reached the centre of the room, and there he stopped; for the soft halo had faded away, and the beautiful presence had disappeared.

It had made no sound, but had gone as though melting into thin air.

"Aldred, it was my sister! Great heaven! What can it mean?"

The king sank into a chair, and gazed upon his companion with a troubled look.

Our hero could only shake his head in reply.

"There must be some cause for this," pursued Edgar. "The spirit of my sister is not at rest. I have thought that her funeral so far away from the scenes of her early joys might have given her this unrest, but that cannot be. If such were the case she would have made it known ere this. There may be danger to someone whom she loves. Can there be danger to the earl? What think you, Aldred?"

Aldred dared not answer. He thought of the attack of the Inverness marauders; he thought of the mysterious death of the prisoner in the dungeon; he thought of dark looks which he had seen upon the brow of the Son of Eric—and he shrank from giving form to suspicions even in his own mind.

Perhaps the king, also, had thoughts which he did not speak. At all events, he was willing to seek his pillow without asking farther questions, and yet his face showed that his mind was deeply occupied.

(To be continued.)

FACETIE.

PHYSICIANS advise us to drink less at our meals. Better advice: drink less between them.

THE difference between Perseverance and Obstinacy—the first is a strong will; the second, a strong wont.

IN reference to ladies' dresses, it is no longer customary to say "the height," but "the breadth" of fashion.

OF all learning, the most difficult department is to unlearn; drawing a mistake or prejudice out of the head is as painful as drawing a tooth, and the patient never thanks the operator.

TO get rid of your troubles, says an exchange, stop thinking of them. Whether you are as lively as a cricket or as dull as rain depends less on the size of your pocket-book than on the condition of your mind.

THERE is a commercial gentleman who is unusually scrupulous in regard to having his door-plate polished every morning, being determined to "leave an untarnished name behind him"—when he goes to the counting-house.

A YOUNG lady was put into a train alone to go to London. As the train was on the point of starting a gentleman rushed up and got in. At this her friends, who were seeing her off, were rather annoyed, but thought it did not much signify. Shortly after the train had started, the gentleman jumped up and exclaimed, "This carriage is too heavy, and must be lightened," and straightway his carpet-bag disappeared out of the window. He sat still a few minutes, when he began again, and this time his coat and waistcoat followed his bag. After a little while he said, "Let us pray for the Duke of Gloucester."

Down they go on their knees, the poor girl, only seventeen, too frightened to do anything but obey. When that was done they prayed for the Duke of York, and then for another—in fact, through a whole string of dukes; they then sat down, the young lady frightened out of her senses. After a few minutes he began again—"It won't do; I can't stand it; the train is too heavy, either you or I must get out; I don't want to, so you must go." The girl in despair says, "But we have not prayed for the Duke of Northumberland." "Ah! no more we haven't." Down they go again on their knees, when luckily the train stopped at a station, and the young lady called the guard, when it was discovered that the gentleman was a lunatic escaped from Hanwell.

A GOOD STORY.

OUT of Nikolsburg comes the story of a Prussian soldier caught vigorously thrashing a Jewish resident, when Count Bismarck happened to pass.

"What, then, has he done?" asked the count, as the soldier stopped to salute him.

"He was abusing the Prussians," replied the soldier.

"Not so," cried the man. "I spoke well of the Prussians—only of Bismarck."

The tittering of the bystanders revealed to the unhappy Jew the mistake he had made.

"Let him go," said Bismarck, quietly. "Greater men than he have done that."

TAXATION.—A grumbler explains that the present system of raising revenue is this:—"Now you see, in the first place, they git the amount of a feller's business. That is taxed. Then they find out how much he earns every month, and that's taxed. Then they find out all about his profits, and on that they lay their tax. Then they manage to get some tax on what he owes. Next comes what they call income, and that's taxed. Then if anything is left, the preacher calls round, and gets it to sustain the church and convert the heathen."

SINGULAR MATRIMONIAL STORY.—The Hon. Obadiah Browne and Mrs. Cora Browne were remarried a short time since at New Haven. They were married nearly a quarter of a century ago, lived happily for some time, and became parents of two sons, now grown up. Trouble came and they were divorced. Mr. Brown married again, and after living with his second wife for a number of years was divorced from her. He finally renewed the acquaintance of his first wife, and the result was that he has now led her to the altar for the second time.

NOVEL USE OF A KISS.—A kiss, ever since the days of Adam, has been a token of friendship; but alas! it has served a traitor's purpose in some cases, as may be seen by the following:—"An agent, not many miles from Lewistown, on arriving at the paternal mansion of his lady, gave and received a kiss of friendship, as he supposed; but alas! the sequel will show how much he was mistaken, for the door being closed he overheard the following conversation:—"Why, Lucy! ain't you ashamed to kiss a man out there all alone with him? When I was a girl I wouldn't have done it for the world." "No, mamma, I am not," answered Lucy, "for I only kissed him to tell by his breath if he had been drinking."

CHAFFING A LANDLORD.—Some persons were brought up lately for disturbance at an inn. A part of the charge against them was the order given by them for supper. Solomon took his seat first, placed his hands upon the table, and issued the following:—"Waiter, bring me a dish of fried mutton-stones and two church steeples cold, without sugar." George next gave his order—"A pint of town pumps done brown, with a spoon in it." Stephens was next on the list, and ordered as follows—"Landlord, bring a quart of station-clerks, two fried contractors, and a bootjack." Mr. Diver came last, and made the following request—"Landlord, bring the Thames Tunnel stuffed with onions, and a pint of South Sea bubbles warm, without." The simple landlord, after considering for a minute, merely answered—"I hain't got 'em, gentlemen," when a row took place.

TRYING THEIR PATIENCE.—Some of our readers may have a poor opinion of the patience of railway clerks; but here is a sample of the questions which they have to answer while selling the tickets:—"Does the next train stop at W—?"—"No, sir; it is the express train." "Don't the express train stop there?"—"No, sir, it goes past." "How much is the fare?"—"Three shillings." "When will the next train go that stops at W—?"—"At four o'clock, sir." "Why don't the express train stop there?"—"Because it goes right through." "Does it ever stop there?"—"No, sir, never." "Will the train that starts at four o'clock stop there?"—"Yes, sir." "There's no danger of its going past without stopping, is there?"—"No, sir." "It isn't the express that goes at four, is it?"—"No, sir." "Couldn't the ex-

press train just as well stop as not?"—"No, sir." "Why don't it?"—"Don't know, sir." "Will this ticket take me to W—?"—"Yes, sir." "Does the train stop anywhere between here and W—?"—"No, sir." "I couldn't get off anywhere for a few minutes, could I?"—"No, sir." "What time does the train start?"—"Four o'clock, sir." "It will be sure to start to its time, will it?"—"Yes, sir!" (angrily). "Well, you might be civil."

THE precipitation with which the dear departed are buried was rather awkwardly exemplified the other day. A workman being taken to the cemetery for dead absolutely broke open his coffin and proceeded to rate the man who drove him. He resumed work in a day or two, but he had considerable difficulty in getting his interment erased from the books of the Commune. It would be a fine argument for a Burgomaster—"But, my good man, you are dead." "How can I be dead if I am here?" "That is all very well, but your death has been certified to, and there is no form to erase such an entry, and I cannot scratch it out in my books. Be off; you are dead—in the eyes of the law." "Burgomaster, allow me—" "I will allow you nothing, sir, but fine you for contempt of the civic power if you argue the point any longer." The *Etoile* when giving the simple facts without any embellishment says that it would be glad to hear the fact contradicted. We, on the contrary, are glad at the poor man's escape.

PIETY OF WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

William (above-stairs, calling down pipe). Haven't we annexed the Duchies?

Bismarck (below). Yes, sire.

William. Added Electoral Hesse to our dominions?

Bismarck. Aye, your Majesty.

William. Likewise seized Nassau and Frankfurt?

Bismarck. True, Oh, King!

William. Deprived our neighbour, the King of Hanover, of his dominions against his will and the will of his people?

Bismarck. Even so, Most Gracious Sovereign by right divine.

William. Then come up to prayers.—Punch.

A SAD CASE.—"An Old Schoolmaster" thinks it very hard that he has to teach little boys the new Latin Primer in his declining years.—Punch.

WHY AND BECAUSE.

Why is the King of Prussia like an exorcist?
Because he has dispossessed his neighbours.—Punch.

A COMPROMISE WITH A CLOUD.—The important question of smoking in railway carriages might be satisfactorily settled if an Act of Parliament were passed as early as possible next Session, compelling every railway traveller who indulges in a cigar or pipe to consume his own smoke.—Punch.

OH, LAW!—A lady, who has purchased a "Vowel" washing-machine, says that she finds the only vowel that will wash is O. Is she quite sure eau isn't a liquid?—Fun.

UNBRIDLED LUXURY.—Well may our contemporaries inveigh against the extravagance of the women of the present day. In *The Birmingham and Midland Hardware District* we read that the daily call for pins in this country is fifteen millions. Some idea of the lavish expenditure of the ladies may be gleaned from the amount of pin-money this represents.—Fun.

NOT SUCH A GREAT MISTAKE.—The *Court Circular* reports that Don Joachim Angnon, the Governor of Seville, has issued a decree which is a bungling imitation of "Lord Campbell's Act." It is so framed as to stop the sale of copies from many of the best works of the old masters, and of casts from the finest of the antique statues. Our contemporary, by a slip of the printer, calls the Don "Governor of Senille," and really his folly is only excusable on the ground of Senille-ity.—Fun.

LAST FROM PARIS.—The latest French novelty is, the papers state, a duck which has been taught to imitate Theresa and sing "*la femme a barbe*." This would be a sign of extreme intelligence on the part of the bird, and of great imitative ability, for Theresa is anything but a duck. The report originated with the paper called *La France Chorale*—a coral that, in this case, is in the mouths of all who have not cut their wisdom teeth. We have, and our belief is that the bird in question is no duck at all unless a canard, which is not a *rara avis* at this season of the year.—Fun.

A POKING JOKE.—One evening at the theatre, John Phoenix observed a man sitting three seats in front whom he thought he knew; he requested the person sitting next to him to poke the other individual with his cane. The polite stranger did so, and the disturbed stranger turning his head a little he discovered his mistake—that he was not the person he took him for. Fixing his attention steadfastly on the

play, and affecting unconsciousness of the whole affair, he left the man with the cane to settle with the other for the disturbance, who being wholly without an excuse, there was of course a ludicrous and embarrassing scene, during all of which Phoenix was interested in the play. At last the man with the cane asked, rather indignantly, "Didn't you tell me to poke the man with my stick?" "Yes." "And what did you want?" "I wanted to see whether you would poke him or not."

AUTUMN DAYS.

Now time has brought the season round
Of russet moors and eves,
Of stubble, 'stead of flowery ground,
Of frosts and fading leaves.

But though the days come up so late,
And walk in shadows drear,
I wait and watch, and watch and wait,
To greet them year by year.

For well I love the wind that shakes
The fading branches bare,
And love the thistle-down that makes
The daisies of the air.

And love to hear the schoolboy's call,
While roves he at his will,
And love to hear the ripe nut fall
When all beside is still.

I love to see the birds take flight,
As silently they rise,
And wheel and turn from left to right,
Like armies in the skies.

I love to see the maples high
To crimson colours run,
And love to see the flocks that lie
So lazy in the sun.

I love the quiet of the air
That charms the wood and wold,
And makes the landscape everywhere
So pleasant to behold.

But more than any pleasant sight
The outward world can show,
I love at coming on of night
To see the hearth-fire glow;

And love to see the circle there—
The child with rosy face,
The sturdy boys, the girls so fair
And full of gentle grace;

The mother in the chimney nook,
Her work upon her knees,
The father, with his pipe or book,
And in his chair of ease.

For still when autumn's chilly rains
Begin to blast and blight
The fields and flowers, the household gains
The varnished warmth and light

A. C.

GEMS.

NEVER despair; if the stream of life freezes put on skates.

He who can take advice is sometimes superior to him who can give it.

EVILS in the journey of life are like the hills which alarm travellers on the road—they both appear great at a distance, but when we approach them we find that they are far less insurmountable than we had imagined.

WE overrate whatever we have accomplished, and underrate what we have never dared to perform. The lady who pruned her rose-bush thought that the clearing of a forest was not such hard work after all.

TIME.—As the waves of the ocean roll upon the winding beach curious yet well-formed shells, which many are glad to treasure up, so the waves of time, as they wash the shores of earth, bring with them precious and glittering bits of wisdom; and those who anxiously stroll upon these shores in quest of such valuables, are rejoiced to pick them up that they may stow them away upon the shelves of their minds for future use.

MIDSHIPMEN.—They enter, not as young men, though they are officially called, "the young gentlemen," but as boys, boys of thirteen or fourteen, who only yesterday were dining in the nursery, and who never were masters of more than a sovereign at a time up to the period of their undertaking to defend the commerce and independence of Great Britain. The midshipman's mess, accordingly, is a great school, governed by a rough public opinion of its own, which shows no mercy to affectation or humbug, and has

not much tenderness even for gentle and harmless forms of weakness or oddity. A bore is laughed at, a sneak is cut, and a very obtrusive bore or sneak runs the risk of being "clobbered"—a punishment inflicted with a sword-scuttle on the part marked out by nature and history for the purpose. This kind of thing knocks the priggishness out of a fellow early. And the duties of his daily life are favourable to his development in a natural way. He has to command a boat, he has to command a top. He is every now and then called upon for the exercise of an independent judgment. Is there too much wind to take the cutter off to the ship, and shall he wait till it moderates? Can the men, or any of them, be trusted to leave the landing-place, without getting themselves drunk, and their young commander into a scrape? Thus he learns to command while he is learning to obey. He has much freedom, and yet lies under control, while the very nature of his work—performed aloft—in boats—at all hours of the day and night—in the open air, during all weathers—in constant contact with the rough side of life—makes an off-hand, free-spoken, decisive, and yet mobile man of him.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

SALLY LUNN.—Sift into a pan one pound and a half of flour; make a hole in the middle of it and put in two ounces of butter, warmed in a pint of sweet milk, a saltspoonful of salt, two eggs, well beaten, and two tablespoonfuls of the best brewer's yeast. Mix the flour well with the other ingredients, and bake it in a turban form, or bread-pan, well greased. It requires to be put to rise at three o'clock, in order to bake it at seven o'clock.

TOMATO CATSUP.—Slice the tomatoes, put a layer in a deep vessel, and sprinkle over some salt; then another layer of tomatoes and salt till all are in. Stand them in the sun for two or three days; when they are soft pass them through a sieve, and put the pulp, thus drained out, over the fire to boil. Add cayenne pepper, whole black pepper, mace, cloves, allspice, and a little race ginger if you like; let it boil till it is thick, add a clove of garlic; by tasting it you can judge if it be seasoned to your taste. When cold, bottle it off; put a tablespoonful of sweet oil on the top of each bottle, and seal the corks.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE Emperor Maximilian's European despatches for the Atlantic cable to the Empress in France cost 15,864 dollars in gold, and was nearly 700 words in cypher.

INTEREST.—A few weeks ago a one-pound note was paid into a bank. It was dated 1828, and it is calculated that the bank has been a gainer of £7 10s. in the shape of interest, at 5 per cent., by its non-circulation.

CIVILIZATION OF THE INDIAN.—The Ottawas, a partially civilized tribe of Indians, are said to have set aside 20,000 acres of a rich reservation belonging to them in Kansas, for the purpose of erecting a university for the education of Indians.

THE EMPRESS'S VOW.—The Empress of the French has felt the greatest alarm for the health of the Emperor, and made a vow, which may be seen in golden form in the church of Notre Dame des Victoires—namely, a gold lamp, with the initials L. N., which burns before the statue of the Holy Virgin in that sacred edifice.

FIELD OF GRAIN.—In a field of oats belonging to Mr. Peter Grant, Ballintua, near Grantown, it was found the other day that three barley grains which had been dropped on the field had produced upwards of 500 returns. From one grain there had sprung nine stalks, yielding 185 returns; while the other two had produced six stalks each, and 183 and 168 returns respectively.

By the Overland Mail we learn that the famine in Orissa was increasing in severity. In the Madras Presidency Lord Napier had set out by sea to visit the famine-stricken district of Ganjam, while an enthusiastic public meeting had been held in the presidency town to propose measures of relief. At this meeting as much was subscribed in one hour as had been raised from the public in Bengal during the past four months.

BARON JAMES DE ROTHSCHILD has within the last few days entirely lost the sight of one eye. It has been ailing for some time, and several of the most eminent oculists in Europe tried in vain to save it. The other eye unfortunately shows symptoms of sympathetic affection, and it is feared that the great Paris banker, whose intellectual faculties are yet as vigorous as ever, will become totally blind. Baron James is seventy-four years of age, but does not look so much.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

BESSIE B.—Read our answer to "Gertrude."
A SOLDIER.—The Victoria Cross was instituted in 1856.
JOHN.—Earl Russell was raised to the peerage in July, 1861.
JESSIE HEND.—Any chemist or druggist will make up the prescription for you.
BESSIE D.—Twenty, dark hair and eyes, and domesticated. Respondent must be dark; no objection to a widower.
HISTORICAL.—Whitehall Palace, the ancient residence of the Sovereigns of England, was destroyed by fire in 1691.
W. M.—A builder, who can earn good wages, 5 ft. 7 in. in height and good looking, would like to hear from a young person in the same station of life as himself.
COCKNEY.—The population of London (City) is 112,247. The registered electors are 18,562. These send four representatives to the House of Commons.
F. WILSON.—Consult the advertising columns of the Times. Scarcely a day passes that there are not advertisements for midshipmen and boys for the mercantile marine.
EVA.—Brown hair, and blue eyes, would like to correspond with a tall, dark, nice looking gentleman, of private property.
ORLANDO.—According to the best information, the first degree of Doctor of Music, at Oxford, was given to John Hamboys, in 1461; esteemed a man of great erudition.
F. W. JEN.—Son of a merchant, twenty-one, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, dark hair and moustache; money no object, as he is in a good position with his father.
BESS.—We should think about seven miles. Any omnibus-conductor on the route, however, would give you the exact distance.
S. H.—Twenty-seven, and very steady. Respondent must be from twenty to twenty-five, domesticated, and good tempered.
E. BROWN.—We can give you no other prescription than temperate living, fresh air, and good exercise. This failing, consult a medical man.
VALERIE.—At your age, the frequent use of salt and water, and a soft brush, will be all sufficient, providing you are in health.
OLIVER DARVEL.—The game of billiards is of very ancient date. It is not, however, precisely known. *De Thou*, the French historian, mentions it as far back as 1576.
J. C. D.—Twenty-two, 5 ft. 10 in. in height, good looking, and in a respectable situation, with a salary of 200*l*. Respondent must be tall, dark, good looking, and fond of home.
W. L. F.—You cannot closely imitate (for sale) a patented article without rendering yourself liable to an injunction, which would prove to your cost; otherwise what would be the use of "letters patent"?
A. LARKER.—I. You can be married by registration. We have, however, so very recently answered this question in full, that we must refer you to our back numbers. 2. Any of the parochial officers will give you the information.
GEORGETTE.—The circumference of the globe is twenty-five thousand and twenty miles. A tunnel through the earth from England to New Zealand would be about 5,000 miles long.
F. W. F.—Nineteen, not bad looking, respectable, fond of poetry, music, and dancing, and no smoker. The young lady must be between seventeen and eighteen, good looking, cheerful, happy, and if possessed of a little money preferred.
TWO BROTHERS.—For sufficiently obvious reasons we cannot undertake to state who is the champion cornet player of England. We never heard a term so applied. The two gentlemen whose names you mention undoubtedly stand at the head of the list.
COMMON SENSE.—desires a young and accomplished lady of about nineteen or twenty. She must be of medium height, good family, kind disposition, and good looking. "C. S." is a little above medium height, and of good education and position.
EMILY.—The process of writing or drawing on glass can be done by procuring some French chalk; place the glass on a table, and, while breathing on it, write with the chalk; after that wipe it with a damp cloth; when dry, the drawing will disappear; breathe on it again and it will return.
A. B. C.—Twenty-one, 5 ft. 11 in., fair, whiskers and moustache, and manly looking, wishes to correspond with a young lady, about seventeen, good looking, and with small fortune. "A. B. C." is a clergyman's son, with a good salary, in a mercantile office in Liverpool.
LOVELY ONE.—thirty-one, but looks much younger, not pretty, though she has a pretty mouth, nice brown hair, white teeth, and a graceful figure. Has read a great deal; can make a pudding, clean a house, and be a lady. No money, but could manage with a moderate in-

come better than some with a great deal. Respondent must be as old as herself, looks are immaterial, nor does "Lonely One" care for more than sufficient money to keep a comfortable and respectable home.

ACTUARY.—You are correct with regard to the number of figures in a billion. There are two methods of notation: one gives but three figures to each denomination above 1,000, while the other gives six; by the first method a billion is written thus, 1,000,000,000; by the second, 1,000,000,000,000.

A SUBSCRIBER.—Apply to the London Stereoscopic Company, Chesapeake, London, or at any photographic establishment. It is a trade in itself, and in the daily papers you may frequently find advertisements for "hands," with offers to applicants, with all particulars.

JANE.—We cannot decide for you. According to Mr. Rimmel's book, "Hair preparations are like medicine, and must be varied according to the requirements of the patient; sometimes oil, at others pomatum or hair-wash." The best of the latter is a mixture of lime juice and glycerine.

ELISE.—An excellent method for preserving apples, throughout the winter is to pack them in barrels or boxes, surrounding each apple with some dried mould and gypsum (plaster of Paris)—not the calcined used for casts, models, &c.—and kept in a cool dry out-house.

STAGE STRUCK.—seventeen, medium height, fair, dark eyes, of a loving and cheerful disposition, and considered very handsome, would like to correspond with an actor. He must be very tall, and dark, and endeavour to get "S. S." on the stage, as she is very fond of it. ("Stage Struck's" verses are unsuitable for print.)

A BERNARD ONE.—It certainly is injudicious to speak words of sympathy to anyone suffering from the loss of a dear friend. On such an occasion no voice is sufficiently sweet to express the fitting words. A quiet clasp of the hand is more consoling than the most eloquent words; indeed, to some minds more would be revolting.

TRIBUTE OF THE FLOWERS.

Lady fair, these winsome flowers

Lay I at thy lovely shrine,
 Garnered sweets from vernal bowers,
 Breathing beauty such as thine.

Roses regal now may greet
 Charms they ne'er before had seen;
 Happy thy this night to meet
 Witching beauty's fairy queen.

Lilies pure as burnished gold,
 Lay thy laurels at thy feet;
 Purity may now unfold,
 Purity a sweet self to greet.

Violets bear their honours true,
 Modest virtue's throne to grace;
 Chastely wreath them round thy brow,
 Nest them in their filial place.

Lady, quickly flowers fade—
 Beauty, too, must soon decay;
 Loveliest forms that nature made
 Bloom on earth but for a day.

ST. GEORGE.—thirty, tall, slender in figure, moderately good looking, fair, a moderate income from a profession, and with good connections. The lady must be well educated, a good housekeeper, have some taste for literature, and have an income or expectancy; the daughter of a professional man preferred.

ARABELLA.—By no means use paint for the face; it is frequently composed of mineral poison, and thus is dangerous to life. A celebrated Belgian singer (*de Zeiger*) some time since met his death by swallowing, by accident, a small portion of the paint he had used. The best recipe for health and beauty is cold water, fresh air, and exercise.

EMILY D. and SARAH H.—"Emily," twenty-four, 5 ft. 2 in. in height, dark brown hair, blue eyes, fair, and of a lively disposition. "Sarah," 5 ft. 2 in. in height, dark brown hair and eyes, fair, lively disposition, and fond of singing; both are domesticated. Respondents must be respectable tradesmen; age no object.

A LOVER OF LIGHT WHITE.—We agree with you. In no wine-drinking country is the development of drunkenness so prevalent as in England. To this Adam Smith testifies long since in the following paragraph: "The cheapness of wine seems to be a great cause, not of drunkenness, but of sobriety. The inhabitants of the wine countries are, in general, the soberest in Europe."

GERTRUDE must not think us wanting in courtesy when we say that we have so frequently and recently given recipes for whitening the hands and curing freckles that, in common justice to our general readers, we must beg of her to take the trouble to search the recent numbers of the *LONDON READER*.

JOHANNES.—Theodore, King of Corsica, was buried in the churchyard of St. Anne, Soho, in 1756, shortly after leaving the King's Bench Prison and taking the benefit of the Insolvent Act. The bankrupt king was buried at the expense of an oilman in Compton Street, who was only too proud to be allowed to pay for once in his life the funeral expenses of a king.

HINDOO.—"Woven Wind" is the poetical name given to the Dacca muslin, the finest workmanship of India. The material is so fine that when placed upon the grass to bleach, the dew makes it disappear. Natives were trained to manufacture it from infancy, and so delicate was the sense of touch required that they were always relieved from mental duties to preserve the tips of their fingers from becoming coarse.

LAVINIA H.—By no means reply to the advertisements offering ladies remunerative employment at their own homes, or you may indeed prove a victim. From the tone of your letter and handwriting, you seem to have been well educated, and, far better, to have a proper feeling. Can you not obtain the employment you seek from one of the houses in your own town or its vicinity? Steadfastly make the attempt, have patience, and, believe us, you will not fail.

EMBERT.—The Iron crown of Lombardy is known to be more than 1,000 years old, and no crown of precious metal and rarest gems has ever been sought so earnestly by sovereigns. It has been worn by Charlemagne, Barbarossa, and Napoleon the Great. Its last possessor was the Emperor of Austria, who, now that he has resigned the title of

King of Lombardo-Venetia, has given to Victor Emmanuel that precious relic of history, of which the Lombards were so proud of vaunting. "The keys of heaven are at Rome, but the Iron crown is at Milan."

MARY SMITH.—thirty-two, tall, fair, with light brown hair, gray eyes, of a lively and cheerful disposition, and very industrious. Respondent must be a tall, steady working man, and not over forty; a widower without family not objected to.

M. DE C.—twenty-two, a young widow, lately from America, and a stranger in London, having been unfortunate and lost all her property, and so unable to return, would like to correspond with an elderly gentleman, with a home. She is fair and affectionate, and would not object to a widower of fifty. No fickle-minded young man need reply.

MABLE.—a young girl in the country, with everything she desires but a loving heart to cheer her in her solitude. She is of medium height, ladylike, sparkling laughing eyes, fair, and withal considered a handsome girl—let us add, for "Mable" has sent us a specimen, the prettiest and purest golden hair we have seen for a long time. "Mable" also is well educated, can sing, play, draw, and speak French. N.B.—No fortune-hunter need apply.

HANDWRITING.—"Nellie and Maggie," respectively neat and ladylike—"Bess," very good—"Valerie," neat and clear—"A Subscriber," very good and business-like.

COLOUR OF HAIR.—"Nellie and Maggie," respectively, so exceedingly pretty that, but for our age, we should certainly become enamoured of the fair owners of the heads from which the locks were cut, and that, too, more from the ladylike precision and neatness of the form in which "N. and M." sent us the specimens than from their intrinsic beauty. There now, "N. and M." won't that do? Neither is it more than you deserve. We are the more sorry that the lines, "The Leaves," and "The Graveyard," are not quite up to the standard required for print. "N. and M." may, however, try again.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.

X. Y. Z. is responded to by—"L. A. K.," a widow, forty, having a good business, employing some young people, and a good pianist.

JULIAN ST. GEORGE by—"Hettie," nineteen, fair, very good disposition, and will have a fortune.

IAGO by—"Zellie," eighteen, rather tall, fair, brown hair, blue eyes, a loving disposition, and very domesticated, but not accomplished.

LIVELY JACK by—"Ada," fair, pretty, and musical.

CHARLES M. by—"Charlotte M."

ALICE by—"Edwin," twenty-two, 5 ft. 10 in. in height, hazel eyes, brown hair, an engineer, with a salary of 250*l*, and a member of a rifle corps.

EDITH by—"J. W. M.," nineteen, and the son of a respectable tradesman.

FAIR LILY by—"Little Jack;" fortune no object.

LEZZIE by—"J. W. H.," a clerk, eighteen, 5 ft. 7 in. in height, dark, good looking, and temperate.

NANNY by—"C. W.," forty, and a bachelor.

LORETT by—"Ebor," thirty-four, 5 ft. 5 in. in height, and dark.

HARRY by—"J. Thomas," twenty-five, 5 ft. 7 in. in height, light auburn hair and moustache, pure Saxon features, a grocer, and doing very well; and—"Fitz," twenty-three, 5 ft. 9 in. in height, dark complexion, and engaged in a lucrative profession. "Fitz" flatters himself that he would make a model husband.

MARY EVANS by—"G. R. E.," twenty-three, tall, fair, and in a business at present yielding about 150*l* per annum.

A. P. by—"Fred," twenty-five, dark, tall, handsome, and in such circumstances as would enable him to secure a comfortable home for an affectionate wife; and—"W. G. D.," twenty, 5 ft. 8 in. in height, considered very good looking, and in a comfortable situation.

M. P. and A. P. by—"Arthur Montgomery" and "Augustus Sinclair," both holding independent positions in society, having large sugar-estate in the East Indies, and annual incomes of 1,000*l*.

ALICE H. by—"Teddy," rather tall, dark, with a good temper, and steady.

SHARVED by—"S. D. V.," twenty three, fair, medium height, and in a good position.

HORE by—"M. A. G.," twenty-seven, 5 ft. 8 in. in height, dark complexion, well educated, has no money, but is master of a good trade.

GREY MAY by—"Cantah," eighteen, 5 ft. 9 in. in height, considered good looking, in a good situation, and with good prospects.

S. A. by—"J. S.," twenty-seven, 5 ft. 9 in. in height, fair, slight, but strong and active, income at present only 100*l*, but has tolerably good prospects.

KATE by—"Hamlet," three years her senior, 5 ft. 9 in. in height, fair, broad high forehead, well educated, of refined tastes and habits, takes public-house, fond of reading, of good character, well connected, of strict moral and religious principles, and, although not rich, has a deposit in the savings' bank, the result of industry and economy, out of a small but progressive salary—"C. H. F.," twenty-four, 5 ft. 7 in. in height, fair, light hair and moustache, fond of music and singing, can play the concertina, a member of the Church of England, and is the son of a tradesman, with good expectations—"Jack," and—"Gerald Fitzgerald," twenty-five, 5 ft. 10 in. in height, considered handsome, good tempered, no smoker, fond of music, and with a competency sufficient for one moderately extravagant.

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